

# SOUTH & SEA YARNS

Basil  
Thomson







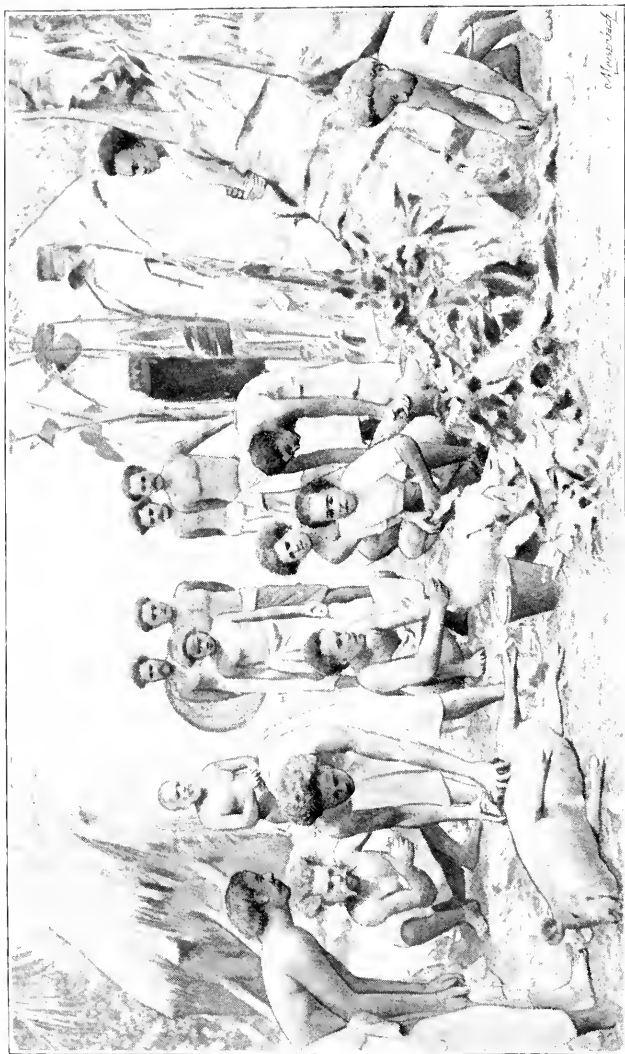




# SOUTH SEA YARNS



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*"While the men were digging the oven and lining it."*

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# SOUTH SEA YARNS

BY

BASIL THOMSON

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON  
MDCCCXCIV



TO

MY WIFE





## INTRODUCTION.

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IN the great *bure* of Raiyawa there was a story-telling. The lying-places filled three sides of the house—mats spread upon grass four feet wide,—and between each lying-place was a narrow strip of bare earth sprinkled with wood-ashes, on which three logs, nose to nose, were smouldering. A thin curl of blue smoke wreathed upwards from each to the conical roof, where they met and filtered through the blackened thatch; so that from outside the *bure* looked like a disembowelled haystack smouldering, ready to burst into flame. On the fourth side was a low doorway, stopped with a thick fringe of dried rushes, through which ever and anon a grey-headed elder burst head-foremost, after coughing and spitting outside to announce his arrival. Beside the doorway

was a solitary couch, the seat of honour, to which the foreigner, footsore and weary with his tramp across the mountains, was directed, having in his turn dived trustingly through the rushes like the rest. The couches were filling, and the elders were settling down in twos to rest, slinging their legs over the fender-bar that lay conveniently on its forked supports, and turning to the grateful glow that part of his anatomy that man delights to roast—for the night was falling, and a chilly mist was rising from the river. Then one of them rose and made with his hand a tiny aperture in the rush-screen, through which the dull twilight showed white. “Beat!” he cried; and the rest beat the reed walls with their open palms, and the house was filled with the angry hum of a myriad mosquitoes, that flew into the smoke and out towards the king-post, and then, seeing the twilight and the fresh air, sailed in a compact string through the opening, so that in three minutes there was not one of them left. Thereafter one might sleep in peace without slapping the back and the bare thighs, for the rushes brushed them from the body of each incomer, and their furious hum outside was impotent to hurt.

At length every place was filled, and from the dark-

ness Bongi began and told of the mountain-paths—how the foreigner would rest before the hill was climbed, gasping like a fish, and asked many foolish questions of the old time and the present ; and of the courts, how Bitukan had had his hair cropped, having been taken in sin and judged ; and of how the foreigner had given him strange meats to eat that were enclosed in iron, having first broken the iron and cooked the meats on a fire.

“Yes,” said Bosoka, “such were the meats that a foreigner gave to the men of Kualendraya, bidding them heat the meats on a fire and eat ; but when they did so, the meats blew up like a gun, and scalded them grievously. Foreigners must be strong indeed to eat such meats.”

“And the foreigner told me tales,” continued Bongi —“wonderful tales, hard to believe : of stone houses larger than this whole village ; of strings going under the sea to other lands by which men talk, sending no ship to bear the tale ; of steamers that go on land faster than a horse can run.”

“Foreigners are great liars,” said old Natuyalewa, sententiously. “But the land steamers may be true, for at Nansori it is said the sugar-cane is carried

by steamers on the land. Tomase, who worked there, told me of this; and it may be true that they talk with strings, for a man may make many signs by jerking a sinnet cord which another holds, pulling harder at times and then softly. But the stone house—such tales as these they tell to increase their honour in our eyes, but they are lies, for there is no land so great as Great Viti.”

Now the foreigner feigned sleep and listened.

“Well,” cried Ngutu from the corner, “the teacher says that our fathers lied about Rokola’s canoe—that the mast fell at Malake and dented the mountains of Kauvandra. He says that a canoe cannot sail so far in a day, even with the wind on the outrigger.”

“The teachers are the foreigners’ mouths, and bark at all our ancient customs, seeking to dishonour them,” growled Natuyalewa. “I am growing old, and the land is changed. When I was young we listened to the words of our elders, but now the young men——”

“Ië! Tell us tales of the old time,” interrupted Bongī: “we will each bring *nambu*: mine shall be the *sevu* of my yams.”

The elders grunted approval from the darkness.

“My *nambu* shall be fish.” “A bunch of white

plantains." "Mine shall be prawns from the stream," cried several.

"I want no *nambu*," replied Natuyalewa, with dignity; "the *nambu* should be given to those who tell tales for gain, seeking to entertain the chiefs, that mats, and fine *masi*, and other property, may be given to them. These will tell of gods and giants, and canoes greater than these mountains, and of women fairer than the women of these days, and of doings so strange that the jaws of the listener fall apart. Such a one gains great honour, and the chiefs will promise him *nambu* before they even hear his tale, remembering the wonders of the last. And he, being known for a teller of strange tales, must ever lie more and more, lest, if he turn back to the truth, the chiefs hearing him may say, 'This fellow's tales were once like running water, but now they are like the village pool: why give him *nambu*?' But I will ask no *nambu*, for I can only tell of that I have seen with my own eyes or heard with my ears; and though I tell you tales of the old time or of distant lands, yet can I tell only of the doings of men and women like to yourselves, who did deeds such as you yourselves do; and when all is told,

you will call the tale emptier than the shell of the Wa-Timo fruit."

Then Natuyalewa began to tell of Rusa, the fisherman of Malomalo, and the foreigner, himself a storyteller in Natuyalewa's line of business, thought ruefully of the wonder-mongers of his own land, and the *nambu* they won, and so pondering, fell asleep.

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## SOUTH SEA YARNS.

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### A COURT-DAY IN FIJI.

A BRIGHT sky vying with the sea for blueness, a sun whose rays are not too hot to be cooled by the sea-breeze, the distant roar of the great Pacific rollers as they break in foam on the coral-reef, the whisper of the feathery palms as they wave their giant leaves above yonder cluster of brown native huts,—all these form a picture whose poetry is not easily reconciled with the stern prose of an English court of law. It is perhaps as well that the legal forms we are accustomed to have been modified to meet the wants of this remote province of the Queen's dominions, for the spot we are describing is accounted remote even in remote Fiji, and the people are proportionately primi-

tive. The natives of Fiji are amenable to a criminal code known as the Native Regulations. These are administered by two courts—the District Court, which sits monthly and is presided over by a native magistrate; and the Provincial Court, which assembles every three months before the English and native magistrates sitting together. From the latter there is no appeal except by petition to the governor, and it has now become the resort of all Fijians who are in trouble or consider themselves aggrieved.

For several days witnesses and accused have been coming in from the neighbouring islands, and last night the village-crier proclaimed the share of the feast which each family was called upon to provide. The women have been busy since daylight bringing in yams, plantains, and taro from the plantations, while the men were digging the oven and lining it with the stones that, when heated, will cook the pigs to a turn.

But already the height of the sun shows it to be past ten, and the District Court has to inquire into several charges before the Provincial Court can sit. The order is given to the native police sergeant to beat the *lali*, and straightway two huge wooden drums boom out their summons to whomsoever it may concern. As the

drum-beats become more agitated and pressing, a long file of aged natives, clad in shirt and *sulu* of more or less irreproachable white, is seen emerging from the grove of cocoa-nut palms which conceal the village. We have but just time to shake hands with our dusky colleague, a shrewd-looking old man with grizzled hair and beard carefully trimmed for the occasion, when the crowd begins to pour into the court-house.

The gala dresses are not a little startling. Here is a dignified old gentleman arrayed in a second-hand tunic of a marine, in much the same plight as to buttons as its owner as to teeth; near him stands a fine young village policeman, whose official gravity is not enhanced by the swallow-tailed coat of a nigger minstrel; while the background is taken up by a bevy of village maidens clad in gorgeous velvet pinafores, who are giggling after the manner of their white sisters until they are fixed by the stern grey eye of the chief policeman, which turns their expression into one of that preternatural solemnity they wear in church. The court-house, a native building carpeted with mats, is now packed with natives, sitting cross-legged, only a small place being reserved in front of the table for the accused and witnesses. The magistrate takes his seat, and his scribe, sitting on the

floor at his side, prepares his writing materials to record the sentences. The dignity with which the old gentleman adjusts his shirt-collar and clears his throat is a little marred when he produces from his bosom what should have been a pair of *pince-nez*, seeing that it was secured by a string round his neck, but is in fact a Jew's-harp. With the soft notes of this instrument the man of law is wont to beguile the tedium of a dull case. But although the spectacle of Lord Coleridge gravely performing on the Jew's-harp in court would at least excite surprise in England, it provokes no smile here. The first case is called on. Reiterated calls for Samuela and Timothe produce two meek-faced youths of eighteen and nineteen, who, sitting tailor-fashion before the table, are charged with fowl-stealing. They plead "Not guilty," and the owner of the fowls being sworn, deposes that, having been awakened at night by the voice of a favourite hen in angry remonstrance, he ran out of his house, and after a hot chase captured the accused red-handed in two senses, for they were plucking his hen while still alive. Quite unmoved by this tragic tale, Vatureba seems to listen only to the melancholy notes of his Jew's-harp; but the witness is a chief and a man of influence withal, and a period

of awed silence follows his accusation, broken only by a subdued twanging from the bench. But Vatureba's eyes are bright and piercing, and they have been fixed for some minutes on the wretched prisoners. He has not yet opened his lips during the case, and as the Jew's-harp is not capable of much expression, it is with some interest we await the sentence. Suddenly the music ceases, the instrument is withdrawn from the mouth, the oracle is about to speak. Alas! he utters but two words, "*Vula tolu*" (three months), and there peals out a malignantly triumphant strain from the Jew's-harp. But the prosecutor starts up with a protest. One of the accused is his nephew, he explains, and he only wished a light sentence to be imposed. Three months for one fowl is so severe; besides, if he has three months, he must go to the central jail and not work out his sentence in his own district. Again there is silence, and the Jew's-harp has changed from triumph into thoughtful melancholy. At length it is withdrawn, and the oracle speaks again, "*Bogi tolu*" (three days).

The prisoners are pounced upon and dragged out by the hungry police, and after a few more cases the District Court is adjourned to make way for the Provincial.

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The rural police—a fine body of men dressed in uniform—take up positions at the court-house doors, and we take our seats beside our sable colleague at the table. A number of men of lighter colour and different appearance are brought in and placed in a row before the table. These are the leading men of the island of Nathula, who are charged with slandering their Buli (chief of district). They have, in fact, been ruined by a defective knowledge of arithmetic, as we learn from the story of the poor old Buli, whose pathetic and careworn face shows that he at least has not seen the humorous side of the situation. It appears that a sum of £70, due to the natives as a refund on overpaid taxes, was given to the Buli for distribution among the various heads of families. For this purpose he summoned a meeting, and the amount in small silver was turned out on the floor to be counted. Now as not a few Fijians are hazy as to how many shillings go to the pound, it is not surprising that the fourteen or fifteen people who counted the money made totals varying from £50 to £100. They at once jumped to the conclusion that the Buli, who was by this time so bored with the whole thing that he was quite willing to forego his own share, had embezzled the money; but



to make suspicion certainty they started off in a canoe to the mainland to consult a wizard. This oracle, being presented with a whale's tooth, intimated that if he heard the name of the defaulter who had embezzled the money, his little finger, and perhaps other portions of his anatomy, would tingle (*kida*). They accordingly went through the names of all their fellow-villagers, naming the Buli last. On hearing this name the oracle, whose little finger had hitherto remained normal, "regardless of grammar, cried out, 'That's him!'"

On their return to Nathula, they triumphantly quoted the oracle as their authority for accusing their Buli of embezzlement. The poor old gentleman, wounded in his tenderest feelings, had but one resort. He knew *he* hadn't stolen the money, because the money hadn't been stolen at all, but then who would believe his word against that of a wizard? and was not arithmetic itself a supernatural science? There was but one way to re-establish his shattered reputation, and this he took. His canoe was made ready, and he repaired to the mainland to consult a rival oracle named *Na ivi* (the ivi-tree). The little finger of this seer was positive of the Buli's innocence, so that, fortified by the

support of so weighty an authority, he no longer feared to meet his enemies face to face, and even to prosecute them for slander. As the Buli was undoubtedly innocent, and had certainly been slandered, the delinquents are reminded that ever since the days of Delphi seers and oracles have met with a very limited success, and are sentenced to three months' imprisonment. And now follows a real tragedy. The consideration enjoyed by the young Fijian is in proportion to the length and cut of his hair. Now these are evidently dandies to the verge of foppishness. Two of them have hair frizzed out so as to make a halo four inches deep round the face, and bleached by lime until it is gradated from deep auburn to a golden yellow at the points. Pounced on and dragged out of court by ruthless policemen, they are handed over to the tender mercies of a pitiless barber, and in a few moments they are as crestfallen and ridiculous as that cockatoo who was plucked by the monkey. The self-assurance of a Fijian is as dependent on the length of his hair as was the strength of Samson.

But now there is a shrill call for Natombe, and a middle-aged man of rather remarkable appearance is brought before the table. "He is a mountaineer, and is

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dressed in a rather dirty *sulu* of blue calico, secured round the waist by a few turns of native bark-cloth. He is naked from the waist upward. The charge is practising witchcraft (*drau ni kau*), a crime which is punishable with twelve months' imprisonment and forty lashes; for the Fijians are so persuaded that a bewitched person will die, that it is only necessary to tell a person he is bewitched to ensure his death within a few days from pure fright. The son of the late Buli of Bemana comes forward to prosecute. The substance of his evidence is as follows: Buli Bemana, who was quite well on a certain Saturday, was taken ill on the Sunday, and expired in great agony on the Monday morning. The portion of his people to whom the accused belongs had complained more than once of the Buli's oppression, and desired his removal. It is the custom for a wizard who has compassed the death of a man to appear at the funeral with blackened face as a sign to his employers that he has earned his reward and expects it. The accused attended Buli Bemana's funeral with blackened face. Moreover, an old woman of Bemana had dreamed that she had seen Natombe bewitching the Buli, and the little fingers of several Bemanas had itched unaccountably. These

last the witness considered were convincing proofs. The accused, in reply, stated that he was excessively grieved at the Buli's death, and that his face at the funeral was no blacker than usual. Several witnesses followed, who deposed that the accused is celebrated throughout the district for his skill in witchcraft, and that he had boasted openly in days gone by that he had caused the death of a man who died suddenly.

Now, as stated above, the belief in witchcraft among Fijians is so thorough, and the effects of a spell upon the imagination of a bewitched person so fatal, that the English Government has found it necessary to recognise the existence of the practice by law. It is, however, none the less wise for the Government officials, without pooh-poohing the existence of witchcraft, to attempt to discourage the belief in its efficacy. Accordingly we call for evidence as to the particular manner in which the alleged spell was cast. There was no caldron nor blasted heath in this case; indeed the whole ceremony was a decidedly tame affair. It was only necessary to procure some of the Buli's hair, or the portions of his food left untasted, and bury them with certain herbs enclosed in a bamboo, and death would ensue in a few days. To our question

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whether the Buli himself thought he was bewitched we receive a decided negative; indeed, we happen to know that the poor old man died of acute dysentery, brought on by cold, and that in this case, if witchcraft had been really practised, the death was a most unfortunate coincidence. As no evidence more incriminating than dreams and the finger-tingling is forthcoming, the accused is acquitted, to be condemned by the other tribunal of public opinion, which evidently runs high. When he has left the court we address the chiefs of Bemana upon the subject of witchcraft generally, as if seeking information. Upon this a number of white-haired old gentlemen, whose boredom has been for some time exchanged for somnolence, wake up and hold forth upon the relative value of hair and nail-parings as instruments for casting spells. While the discussion becomes animated and the consensus of opinion appears to be gathering in favour of toe-nails, we electrify the assembly by suggesting an experiment. They are to select two of their wisest wizards, we are to supply the necessary means, and they are to forthwith cast their most potent spell over us. On the result is to rest their future belief in witchcraft. If we have not succumbed in a month's

time there is no truth in the practice. If we do die, they may not only believe in it, but they will, of course, be held guiltless of our death. A dead silence ensues. Then, after much whispered conversation, an old man addresses the court, pointing out that white men eat different food from Fijians, for do they not live upon flour, tinned meat, rice, and other abominations? And do they not despise the succulent yam, and turn up their noses at pork, dried lizard, and tender snake? Therefore is it not obvious that the powers of witchcraft will be lost upon such beings? Now we have with us a Tongan servant, by name Lijiate (being the nearest Tongans can get to Richard). This man, being half-educated, and above all a Tongan, is full of contempt for Fijians and their barbarous customs. He has long talked contemptuously of witchcraft, which he considers fit only for the credence of heathens, not of good Christians like himself. Here is a chance for Richard to distinguish himself and us. We make the offer. Richard is to be bewitched on the same terms as ourselves. He at least does eat yams and pork, and though he has not yet taken kindly to snake, the difference is trifling. But we have counted without our host. "*Fakamolemole*"

(pardon), says Richard, "I almost believe in it myself. I pray you have me excused." This spikes our gun, for though, doubtless, some of our Fijian servants would consent to be experimented on, they would probably pine away and die from pure fright, and re-establish the belief in witchcraft for ever.

Our discomfiture is best covered by attention to business. Two more cases of larceny are heard and disposed of, and now two ancient dames, clad in borrowed plumes, consisting of calico petticoat and pinafore, are led before the table. Grey-headed and toothless, dim as to sight and shapeless as to features, they look singularly out of place in a court of law. Time was (and not so very long ago) when women so decrepit as these would have had to make way for a more vigorous generation by the simple and expeditious means of being buried alive, but now they no longer fear the consequences of their eccentricities. One of these old women is the prosecutrix, and the charge is assault. We ask which is the prosecutrix, and immediately one holds out and brandishes a hand from which one of the fingers has been almost severed by a bite. She has altogether the most lugubrious expression that features such as hers can assume, but

with the bitten finger now permanently hung out like a signboard, words of complaint are superfluous. The other has a truculent and forbidding expression. She snaps out her answers as if she had bitten off the ends like the prosecutrix' finger, and shuts her mouth like a steel trap. The quarrel which led to their appearance in court might have taken place in Seven Dials. Defendant said something disparaging about prosecutrix' daughter. Prosecutrix retaliated by damaging references to defendant's son, and left the house hurriedly to enjoy the luxury of having had last word. Defendant followed and searched the village for her, with the avowed intention of skinning her alive. They met at last, and having each called the other "a-roasted-corpse-fit-for-the-oven," they fell to with the result to the prosecutrix' finger already described. The mountain dialect used in evidence is almost unintelligible to us, so that our admonition, couched in the Bauan, has to be translated (with additions) by our native colleague. But our eloquence was all wasted. Defendant utterly declines to express contrition. Our last resource must be employed, and we inform her that if she does not complete the task imposed on her as a fine she will be sent to Suva jail, there to be confined



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with the Indian women. This awful threat has its effect; and the dread powers of our court having thus been vindicated, the crier proclaims its adjournment for three months. The spectators troop out to spend the rest of the day in gossiping about the delinquents and their cases. The men who have been sentenced are already at work weeding round the court-house, subjects for the breathless interest and pity of the bevy of girls who have just emerged from court and are exchanging whispered comments upon the alteration in a good-looking man when his hair is cut off. None are left in the court-house but ourselves, the chiefs, and the older men. The table is removed, and the room cleared of the paraphernalia of civilisation. Enter two men bearing a large carved wooden bowl, a bucket of water, and a root of *yangona*, which is presented to us ceremoniously, and handed back to some young men at the bottom of the room to chew. Meanwhile conversation becomes general, witchcraft is discussed in all its branches, and compassion is expressed for the poor sceptical white man; *sulukas* (cigarettes rolled in banana leaves) are lighted; the chewed masses of *yangona* root are thrown into the bowl, mixed with water, kneaded, strained, and handed to each person

according to his rank to drink; tongues are loosened, and it is time to draw the meeting to a close. The sun is fast dipping into the western sea when the last of our guests leave us, and we have a long moonlight ride before us. There is but just time to pack up our traps and have a hasty meal before we are left in darkness, but the moon will rise in an hour, so we may start in safety in pursuit of the train of police and convicts who are carrying the baggage.

## THE LAST OF THE CANNIBAL CHIEFS.

WHEN Swift wrote his "Modest Proposal," and argued with logical seriousness that the want and over-population in Ireland should be remedied by the simple expedient of eating babies, the satire was not likely to be lost upon a people who regarded cannibalism with such horror and loathing as do the European nations. The horror must of course be instinctive, because we find it existing in the lowest grades of society; but the instinct is confined to civilised man. The word cannibal is associated in our minds with scenes of the most debased savagery that the imagination can picture; of men in habits and appearance a little lower than the brute; of orgies the result of the most degrading religious superstition. It is not until one has lived on terms of friendship with cannibals that one realises that the practice is not

incompatible with an intelligence and moral qualities which command respect. And after all, if one can for a moment lay aside the instinctive horror which the idea calls up, and dispassionately consider the nature of cannibalism, our repugnance to it seems less logically grounded. It is true that it must generally entail murder, but that is certainly not the reason for our loathing of it. It is something deeper than this; and the distinction we draw between the flesh of men and of animals is at first sight a little curious. One can imagine the inhabitants of another planet, whose physical necessities did not force them to eat flesh,—to take life in order to live,—regarding us with much the same kind of abhorrence with which we look on cannibals. Most of our natural instincts are based upon natural laws, which, when broken, are sure to visit the breaker with their penalties. The eating of unripe fruit, of putrid meat, or poisonous matter, are some of these. But no penalty in the shape of disease seems to be attached to cannibalism.

What, then, are the motives that lead men, apart from the pressure of famine, to practise cannibalism? Among certain African tribes, and lately in Hayti, it has been the outcome of a debased religious supersti-

tion, or that extraordinary instinct common to all races which leads men to connect the highest religious enthusiasm with the most horrible orgies that their diseased imagination can conceive. The feeling that leads members of sects to bind themselves together by the celebration of some unspeakable rite perhaps led to the accusations laid against the Christians of the second century and the Hungarian Jews of the nineteenth. But in the South Seas, although the motive has been falsely attributed to a craving for animal food, it was generally the last act of triumph over a fallen enemy. Thus Homer makes Achilles, triumphing over the dying Hector, wish he could make mince-meat of his body and devour it. Triumph could go no further than to slay and then to assimilate the body of your foe; and the belief that, by thus making him a part of you, you acquired his courage in battle, is said to have led a chief of old Fiji to actually consume himself the entire body of the man he had killed, by daily roasting what remained of it to prevent decomposition.

This is not a very promising introduction to a paper intended to show that some cannibals at least may be very respectable members of society. But it must be

clearly understood that the eccentricity which seems so revolting to us is not incompatible with a strong sense of duty, great kindness of heart, and warm domestic affection.

Out of the many cannibals and ex-cannibals I have known, I will choose the most striking figure as the subject of this sketch. I first met the Buli of Nandrau in the autumn of 1886, when I took over the Resident Commissionership of part of the mountain district of Fiji. His history had been an eventful one, and while he had displayed those qualities that would most win the admiration of Fijians, to us he could not be otherwise than a remarkable character. Far away, in the wild and rugged country in which the great rivers Rewa and Singatoka take their rise, he was born to be chief of a fierce and aggressive tribe of mountaineers. Constantly engaged in petty intertribal wars, while still a young man he had led them from victory to victory, until they had fought their way into perhaps the most picturesque valley in all picturesque Fiji. Here, perched above the rushing Singatoka, and overshadowed by two tremendous precipices which allowed the sun to shine upon them for barely three hours a-day, they built their village, and here they became a name and a terror to

all the surrounding tribes. A few miles lower down the river stood the almost impregnable rock-fortress of the Vatusila tribe, and these became the staunch allies of Nandrau. Together they broke up the powerful Noikoro, exacted tribute from them, and made the river theirs as far as Korolevu; together they blotted out the Naloto, who held the passes to the northern coast, killing in one day more than four hundred of them, and driving the remnant as outcasts into the plain. Long after the white men had made their influence felt throughout Fiji,—long after the chief of Bau was courted as King of Fiji,—these two tribes, secure in their mountain fastnesses, lived their own life, and none, whether Fijian or white man, dared pass over their borders.

But their time was come. The despised white man, whom they had first known in the humble guise of a shipwrecked sailor or an escaped convict, was soon to overrun the whole Pacific, and before him the most dreaded of the Fijian gods and chiefs, the most honoured of their traditions, were to pass away and be forgotten.

In the year 1867 a Wesleyan missionary named Baker, against the advice of all the most experienced of the European settlers and the native chiefs, announced

his intention of exploring the mountain districts alone. He said that he would take the Bible through Vitilevu. What good to the missionary cause he hoped for from his hazardous journey it is difficult to imagine. The harm that would certainly result to his fellow-missionaries if he were killed, and the loss of life that must ensue, must have been apparent to him and to every one else. But in spite of every warning, he persisted in his foolhardy enterprise, and he paid for it with his life and with the lives of several hundred others. He ascended the river Rewa with a small party of native teachers, but when he passed into the mountain district a whale's tooth followed him: for the power of the whale's tooth is this—that he who accepts it cannot refuse the request it carries with it, whether it be for a mere gift, or for an alliance, or for a human life. So he went on, while tribe after tribe refused to accept the fatal piece of ivory; but none the less surely did it follow him. At length one night, while he slept in a village of the Vatusila, the whale's tooth passed on before him to the rock fortress of Nambutautau, and their chief, Nawawambalavu, took it. When, next morning, Baker resumed his march, this chief met him in the road, and together they crossed the Singatoka river. As they



climbed the steep cliff which leads to Nambutautau, it is recorded in a popular song of that time that the chief warned him ironically of his impending fate. "We want none of your Christianity, Mr Baker. I think that to-day you and I shall be clubbed." Suddenly, at a spot where the path lies between high reeds, on the edge of a precipice, an attack was made upon them, and they were all struck down except two native teachers who crawled into the thickest of the reeds and made their way, the one to Rewa and the other to Bau, hiding during the day-time and travelling under cover of the darkness. Baker's body was flung over the precipice, and the great wooden drum boomed out its death-beat to the villages far down the valley. That night the stone-ovens were heated for their work, and the feast was portioned out to the various allies. But the most honourable portion—the head—was sent to Nandrau, the subject of my sketch. At first he refused it, disapproving of the murder, which his foresight warned him would bring trouble upon them. But as his refusal threatened to sever the alliance, he afterwards accepted it. It is recorded that the feet, from which the long boots had not been removed, were sent to Mongondro, whose chief, a melancholy, gentle-mannered

old man, was much disappointed at finding the skin of white men so tough.

After terrible hardship and danger, the wounded teacher made his way to the coast, and carried the news to Bau. A strong alliance was at once formed among the coast tribes to avenge the murder, and to crush the power of the mountaineers. There is in this part of Fiji no gradation between the plains that fringe the coast and the mountains. A sheer barrier of rock, looking like the ruins of a gigantic fortification, rises boldly from the plain, broken only by the valleys which form the river-beds. Behind this wall lay a land of mystery, whose inhabitants were invested with superstitious terrors, to which their ferocity and the extraordinary appearance of their huge mops of hair had doubtless contributed.

The attacking party was divided into three forces. One of them was to advance up the Singatoka from the south, a second to enter the "Devil" country by way of the Rewa from the east, and the third, commanded by the King of Fiji in person, was to surprise the valley of Nandrau from the northern coast. With the two first we have nothing to do, because they were defeated by the intervening tribes and turned back long before

they reached their destination. The third, hoping to form a junction with their allies, advanced boldly through the mountain passes. The country seemed deserted. They burned two or three abandoned villages, and emboldened by their success, they pressed on, more like an eager rabble than a military force, each man hoping to be the first to secure plunder. As they straggled over the grassy hills that surround Nandrau, suddenly from every clump of reeds big-headed warriors sprang up; they found themselves hemmed in, and Nandrau, headed by their chief, spent the day in slaughtering the flower of the Bau army. A remnant fled to the coast, hotly pursued by the mountaineers; and so crushing was the defeat that the king, Thakombau, narrowly escaped death at the hands of his vassals of Tavua.

Not long after this victory, which had so firmly established his prestige in the mountains, Buli Nandrau seems to have become favourably inclined towards the Europeans; and when a joint expedition of whites and natives was despatched to reduce Nambutautau, he seems to have been permitted to remain neutral. Nambutautau was burnt, and the Vatusila and Noikoro tribes compelled to sue for peace. In

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1874 Buli Nandrau met Consul Layard, and promised his allegiance to the British Government. Teachers were allowed to enter the principal mountain villages, and until the year 1875 the mountaineers became nominal Christians. In that year an event occurred which severely tried the firmness and good sense of Buli Nandrau. The islands had been annexed to Great Britain, and the mountain chiefs were invited to meet the first Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, at Navola on the southern coast. Some of them accepted the invitation, among whom was Buli Nandrau, who was anxious to judge for himself what the new order of things really was. He frankly gave his allegiance to the Government, and in spite of the strongest temptation he never wavered afterwards. For in the same year a terrible epidemic of measles, introduced accidentally from Sydney, carried off 40,000—nearly one-third of the whole population of the islands. It was natural that the mountaineers, perishing under this relentless and unknown disease, should have regarded it as the vengeance of the gods they had so lately deserted. If Christianity were a good thing, they said, why could it not save their children from death?

And so, early in 1875, most of the mountain tribes threw off the *sulu* (the Christian dress), and returned to the worship of their heathen gods. Only Buli Nandrau, seeing what the end must be, remained stanch, and by forming a barrier between the revolted tribes and those still wavering in their loyalty, prevented the disaffection from spreading. An expedition was despatched under Captain, now Major, Knollys, and, with the assistance of the native allies, soon reduced the rebels to submission. They all nominally again embraced Christianity, and an entrenched camp, garrisoned by an armed native force, and commanded by a Resident Commissioner, was established to ensure the future peace of the district.

Protected by their isolation from the vices of civilisation, and enjoying a large share of self-government, these reformed cannibals are to-day the most contented and prosperous of all the Queen's subjects in Fiji; and if ever it has been necessary to adopt measures for their good which they could not understand at the time, the Commissioner has been always sure of the support and influence of Buli Nandrau.

I first saw him at the Provincial Council at Navola

in 1886. He had no sooner arrived with his retinue than he sent his *mata* (herald) to announce him, and in a few minutes entered my house alone. He was a very tall, erect old man of about sixty-five or seventy—grey-haired, keen-eyed, and intelligent-looking. After the usual ceremonies inseparable from Fijian etiquette, he sat down and spoke of the politics of the district. It appeared to me remarkable that a man who had only left his native mountains two or three times, to take part in the great Council of Chiefs, should be so well acquainted with the history and political situation of the coast tribes of Fiji. He spoke with great affection of Sir Arthur Gordon and of the ex-Commissioner, and bewailed the death of the great mountain chiefs whose places were now inadequately filled by their sons.

He was never absent from his place for a moment during the three days the council lasted, and his interest in the trivial affairs of other districts never flagged. It was curious to observe the great deference paid to his opinion by the other chiefs. When one of them, Buli Naloto, was found to have failed in his duties, Nandrau was appointed to reprove and caution him. His speech, which was short and to the point,

was a model of that kind of eloquence. "Art thou," he said, "a chief in thine own right, to make war and to make peace as it pleases thee? Where was thy tribe before the Government came? A scattered remnant, seeking refuge on the plains from the vengeance of Nandrau! But the Government has taken pity on thee, and the land is at peace. Why art thou then disobedient to the Government, who has made thee a chief, and re-established thee in the lands of thy fathers?" This reproof was received by Buli Naloto with the most abject humility.

Not long after this, Buli Nandrau consulted me about the projected marriage of his daughter with the provincial scribe, who lived with me. He wished, he said, to cement by this marriage the ancient ties between Nandrau and Noikoro, but the day had passed for marrying girls against their will. His elder daughter had been a great grief to him. She had been so married, and had not long ago put an end to her life. Did I, he asked, from what I knew of Durutalo, think that Janeti would be happy with him?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This marriage afterwards took place, and, less than a year later, Janeti, too, attempted her own life. This was after her father's death.

This was not the only example I had of his strong domestic affection.

In the spring of the following year he wrote to me, asking for medicine to relieve a pain in his jaw, and from this time he was unable to leave his village. At length, one day early in July 1887, I received a pathetic letter from him, asking me to lose no time in coming to him. "I am very ill," he wrote, "and I would have you see my face before I die."

As the messenger, when questioned, made light of his illness, and I was myself not well enough to undertake so tiring a journey, I determined to wait until I was sure that his urgency was not merely the result of low spirits. But late on the following Sunday night I was awakened by the challenge of the sentry, and immediately afterwards the deep cry of respect, known as the *tama*, sounded outside my sleeping-house. Lights were brought, and on the doorstep crouched a man, muddy, travel-stained, and exhausted by a long journey. I recognised him as a native of Nandrau, who was selected for his fleetness as district messenger, and when I saw that his hair and beard were cut short, I knew the nature of his errand.



"The chief is dead," he said; "and he told Tione not to bury him till you, sir, had seen his face. Tione sends you this message."

There was another reason that required my presence at Nandrau: Tione was not the only claimant to the succession, and I must be there to prevent a disturbance. The messenger would not even wait for food, but returned at once to announce my coming.

In a moment the camp was all awake, and the men turned out to prepare for the journey. The horses were brought in and saddled, and the baggage rolled up in parcels to be carried over the mountain roads. Before daybreak we were fording the river with an escort of some thirty armed constabulary and baggage-carriers. The road lay for some miles along the crest of a forest-clad ridge more than three thousand feet above the sea-level, and when it emerged near the old site of Nambutautau into open country, nothing could exceed the grandeur of the scenery. Two thousand feet below us on the right rushed the Singatoka, foaming among great boulders of rock, and still towering above us was the great wooded range that formed the watershed of the island; while far away before us rose the mountain-wall which separated

Tholo from the plains, seeming with its bare masses of castellated rock like a great ruined fortification. And now the road began to descend, and following a precipitous path, which momentarily endangered the legs of our horses, we plunged into the cool shadow of the precipices that overhung Nandrau. At a turn in the road we saw below us the now historical village, jutting out over the river upon a broad ledge of rock. The *rara*, or village square, was crowded with people, and I noticed a train of women descending the sheer face of the opposite cliff, with loaded baskets on their backs, holding on to stout vines to steady themselves. Here we halted to give time to a messenger to announce our arrival, according to native custom. We watched him enter the village, and saw the people vanish as if by magic into the houses, or sit in groups at the foot of the cocoa-nut palms, and then, in perfect silence, we passed through the village. At the fence that separated the dead chief's enclosure from the square we dismounted, and were conducted by his eldest son, Tione, to the clean matted house in which we were to lodge.

All through the night there was an incongruous mixture of the sounds of merriment and sorrow. On

the river-bank behind our house the five widows of the dead chief, with their women, howled and wailed till morning, like animals in pain. Sometimes the wails would die away into faint moans, and then a wild shriek from one of them would set them all going again. But on the other side stood the great *bure*, where all the funeral guests were feasting and drinking *yangona* in honour of the departed spirit.

Early next morning a messenger came to the door of our hut to ask if we would see the Buli's face. Followed by several of my men carrying the funeral gifts, I climbed to a small house built upon a high stone foundation. The inside was crowded with the neighbouring chiefs, and I took my seat in silence. At the far end, wrapped in folds of native cloth and the finest mats, lay the body. The whale's tooth and funeral gifts were now brought in and formally presented by the *Mata-ni-vanua*, and accepted by an old man in the ancient Nandrau dialect, of which I could scarcely understand one word. And then, when a costly *Rotuma* mat had been given for the body to lie upon in the grave, I made a short speech in the Bau dialect, and was conducted to see the face uncovered.

At mid-day the great wooden drum was tolled, and

the armed constabulary, looking very neat in their white *sulus* and blue tunics, were drawn up as a guard of honour near the cairn which was to form the grave. At length the body, wrapped in mats, and followed by the wives and relations of the dead chief, passed slowly to the grave. Among all the mourners, I only noticed one case of genuine grief — the chief's daughter, Janeti; all the others, as is usual in Fijian funerals, appeared to wail in a prescribed form. Indeed one of the widows, having probably seldom seen a white man before, stopped wailing for a moment to point me out eagerly to the other mourners. Then the body was carried into the little hut that surmounted the cairn, and we stood in the broiling sun until a native teacher had delivered a sort of funeral sermon.

When all was finished, every one acted according to the old proverb, "Le roi est mort!—Vive le roi!" and the question of whom I would appoint as his successor became the subject of discussion. When I returned to my house, I saw the widows at the water's edge breaking up a number of carved wooden utensils with stones. These were the cups and dishes of their dead husband, which no man must henceforth touch

lest their teeth drop out or they be bewitched. For if a man should drink from the cup of one who has eaten his relation, such evil will certainly befall him. But as I was exempt from this danger, the cup and the platter and fork, used by the Buli in old days for human flesh, were presented to me.

At three o'clock I summoned a great meeting of all the natives, at which speeches in honour of the late chief were made, and I there provisionally appointed Tione—a rather unintelligent man of about thirty-five—to succeed his father, having first ascertained that this appointment would be acceptable to the majority. In the evening the people of Nandrau made a great feast to their visitors, and gave them return presents—a polite intimation that they were expected to leave on the following morning. These having been divided among the various tribes who were represented, feasting was continued until a late hour. But about nine o'clock, before the moon rose, an old man went out into the bush to call the dead Buli's spirit. We heard his voice calling in the distance for several minutes, and then, amid the breathless silence of the assembled people, we heard the footsteps of some one running. "He has the spirit

on his shoulders," said a man near me, as the old man rushed past me to the tomb. Apparently he must have thrown the spirit into it, for after crying out, "It is all well," every one retired quietly to their huts for the night.

Before daybreak the next morning, Buli Nandrau was forgotten in the bustle of speeding parting guests, and as the sun rose our bugle sounded the "fall-in." Passing out of the sombre shadow of the great cliff, we rode into bright sunlight, and we felt that just so had the shadows of the past given place to the light of a clearer knowledge, and that with this old warrior the old order had passed away, and a new had come.

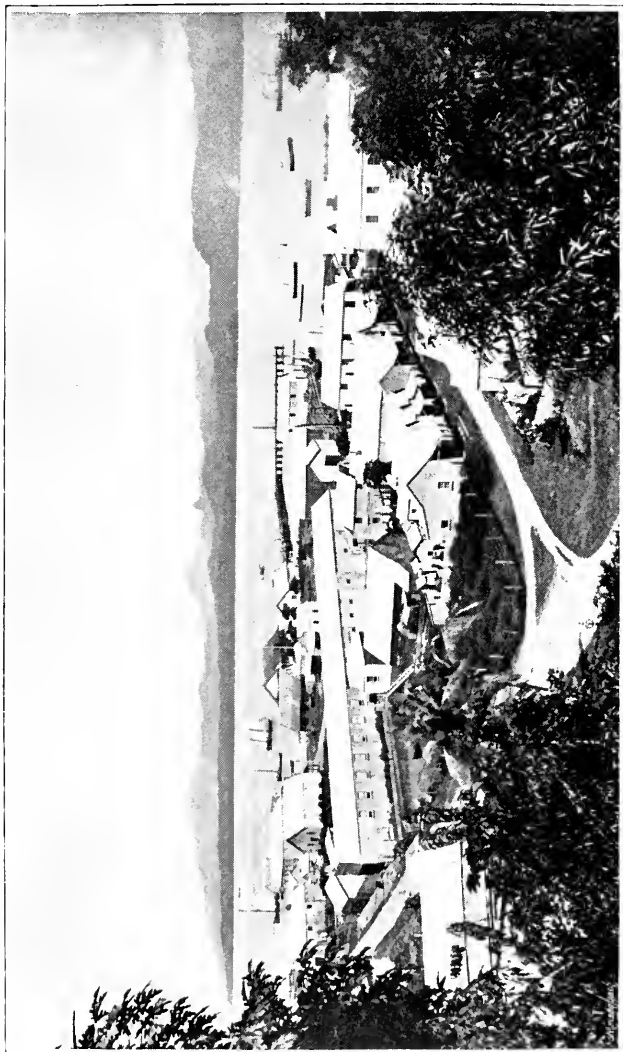
## TAUYASA OF NASELAI, REFORMER.

**T**AUYASA, commoner, of Naselai village, of the tribe Kai Nuku, lived years before his time. It was his misfortune that he was born a savage with a brown skin: it should not be his fault if he did not enjoy the sweets of civilisation. White men owned land on the banks of the great river: so did he. White men wore trousers and ate with a knife and fork: so would he. White men owned cutters and paid his countrymen to work for them: and so he bought a cutter of his own and paid his fellow-villagers to plant his bananas. White men had chairs and tables, glass windows and wooden floors, horses and saddles, and an account at the bank: Tauyasa persevered until at last he possessed all these. And so Tauyasa came to be well thought of and patronised by his white neighbours, and the more he rose in their estimation the deadlier

grew the envy of his own people. For Tauyasa was no chief, and among his people to attempt to rise above the station to which one is born, and to refuse to give to him who asks, are social crimes beside which all other sins are mere errors of judgment. But Tauyasa cared for nothing but that his bananas should have fifteen "hands" to the bunch, and that his cutter should not be too late for the steamer. When the commission agent showed him his account sales, he took the cheque straight to the bank, and received from the teller a slip on which his total balance was written, which he would compare with some cabalistic signs he had in a soiled copy-book at home. For Tauyasa applied his knowledge of human nature wherever his financial reasoning failed him. "The foreigner," he argued, "who owns this bank does not guard my money and make it multiply because he loves me, but because he hopes some day to steal some of it. Therefore will I ask him every two weeks to confess how much he has. Then, although I am black, he will not rob me unless he robs the other foreigners whose money he keeps, and this he will not dare to do."

But on the night of each return from the capital he could not escape from the ties of kindred. First, there





*"On the night of each return from the capital."*



came his uncle, a plaintive old man, who carefully bolted the door before unburdening himself of his troubles. He had no lamp, for the kerosene was dry, and there was no sugar to drink with his tea, so he drank no tea, and his stomach felt so bad that he thought some foreign drink was the only medicine that would cure him. Then a peremptory voice from without summoned him to open the door, and Alivate, the chief's henchman, was admitted. He had all the self-confidence that distinguishes those who bask in the smiles of royalty. "Greeting!" he said. "The chief has sent me to you to borrow your horse for tomorrow. I will take it now with the saddle. Also he wants a root of *yangona*."

"Will the chief send the horse back? The last time he left the horse at Namata, and the saddle was lost."

"Perhaps he will send it back. Give me the saddle."

He gave place to a man in a white shirt, with a book and pencil, all deprecating piety and smiles, who called Tauyasa "sir," and seemed in his way of speaking to be perpetrating a cruel caricature of the neighbouring Wesleyan missionary.

"I have come, sir," he said at last, with a little chuckle, "about the *vaka-misonari*. Paula has promised to give one pound, the same as you gave last year. It is written in the book that Paula will give this. You, sir, will doubtless give two pounds this year. Your name will then be printed so that all will know. I will write down two pounds, sir. Is it not so?"

After him came Savuke, Tauyasa's second cousin, with a pitiful tale about her husband, sentenced that day by the courts to pay five pounds for beating an Indian with a stick. "If he does not pay to-morrow," she said tearfully, "they will crop his hair, and he will work, and then who will feed me and the child? The Indian was a bad Indian, as they all are, nor did he beat him hard, but only twice—on the head. And I, knowing your pitiful nature, have come to you, Tauyasa, because you are my relation and have much money, and afterwards Joseva will pay you back."

"Joseva owes me seven pounds already."

"Yes, he knows that, and the remembrance is heavy with him. He is still seeking money with which to pay you."

"Well, then, I will release him from the debt that

his mind may be at rest, but this money that you ask I cannot give."

Then Tauyasa's wife, who had been visiting a neighbour, came to greet her lord. Their child was lately dead, though Tauyasa had bought two cows and fed it upon milk, and otherwise followed all the directions for rearing infants that were printed in 'Na Mata.' She, too, was the bearer of bad news. Some one—presumably an enemy—had stolen the cows' tether-ropes, and one of them, the spotted one, had been found in the Company's cane-field, having damaged many stools of cane, and the white one could not be found at all. "I think it is the Indians," she said; but Tauyasa thought otherwise, and said nothing.

The man with the book had accomplished his devastating raid, and had set down the names of half the village to give "to the Lord" more than they possessed. Therefore, rather than break faith so pledged, they must beg, borrow, or steal enough to meet their obligations. First, of course, they tried Tauyasa, but he had heard a friend of his, a white storekeeper, assailed in the same way, and he knew the logical answer. "If you must owe money at all, it is better to owe it 'to the Lord,' who can afford it, than to me who cannot. Be-

sides, you would be giving my money and calling it yours, which is a lie, for which you would certainly be punished in hell." But that night several of Tauyasa's imported hens were missing.

At last they all went and left him alone to take the cure for all the cares of civilised life; and, a little less than half drunk, he went off to the store to associate with his equals. There his voice might have been heard haranguing the knot of grinning colonists who frequented the store, and his peroration ran thus: "God made a mistake when He made me black. Um [tapping his chest], black man! Um [tapping his forehead], white man!"

But though Tauyasa increased in wealth and substance, his life was not happy. It is true that his people had given up *kerekere*, and no longer begged his money from him; but they took no pains to hide their hatred and contempt. It was in vain for him to show them that so long as they held their goods in common they must remain savages. They preferred to live from day to day, as their fathers did, leaving the morrow to take care of itself. It was well enough for a foreigner, who knew no better, to work all day, and to hoard money, and to give nothing for nothing; but here was

one of themselves aping the ways of foreigners as an excuse to cover his natural churlishness and inhospitality. "To do like Tauyasa" became a by-word in the village. Truly, he was born before his time: he was of the stuff of which reformers are made, and he met the reformer's fate. He had quarrelled with his wife because she gave away his things in his absence; his own people would have nothing to do with him, and the foreigners whom he imitated despised him.

So Tauyasa began to worry, and the native who does that is doomed, because he was born to a life free from care, and has had no training in the curse of Adam. He grew thin and irritable, and no longer joined the nightly meetings at the store. But the more he worried the bitterer were the taunts of his people, and a kind friend, of course, repeated them to him. Then a day came when the cutter's sails were stripped, and the bananas hung uncut, although a steamer had come in these two days; for Tauyasa would ship no more bananas, having taken to his mat, and given out that he would die that day week. It was in vain for those of his white friends that had heard of his illness to send him soup, and medicines, and milk-puddings cunningly

devised, for Tauyasa would eat none of them, knowing that he must die, and caring not to live—for there was bitterness in his heart against the world and all men in it. And upon the day appointed Tauyasa died as he had said, and his body was wrapped in rolls of white *masi* and mats, and buried, and his spirit went to its own place.

Then it was found how many brothers Tauyasa had, and how many brothers his father and mother had. They all came to his house after the funeral to transact some little matters of business. There was a want of brotherly love at this meeting, for Tauyasa had owned a cutter worth £200, and a cutter cannot be satisfactorily divided among several eldest brothers. There was a horse, too, and a table, and cupboards, and many camphor-wood boxes made in China, and in one of the boxes there were many bottles that would each have cost the vendor fifty pounds in fines had the police known. There was not much said about Tauyasa. It was a sad thing, no doubt, that he was dead, but did not his possessions remain? At evening it was all settled. The eldest uncle had the house with the glass windows, and the brothers had all the rest: only Tauyasa's wife got nothing because she



was a bad woman, and did not love Tauyasa; and besides, she belonged to a different tribe.

And on the Sabbath the *lali* beat for service, and the same teacher took the pulpit that had come to Tauyasa about his contribution to the *vaka-misonari*. It was a powerful sermon—all about the wicked and hell, and such things, and it was none the less powerful that the preacher was mimicking the ravings and the whispers, and the cushion-thumping denunciations, of the district missionary who had taught him. They were all sinners, he summed up—they broke the Commandments every day: but there was forgiveness for all there present. Yet, he added in a hoarse whisper, there were some who could never be forgiven. Then with the roar of an angry bull he shouted, “Who shipped China bananas on the Sabbath?” “On the Sabbath,” repeated the echo from the other side of the river. “Who shipped China bananas on the Sabbath?” Then in the hushed pause that followed he whispered hoarsely, “Tauyasa! Tauyasa!”

Again he roared, banging the table with his fist, “Where is Tauyasa now? Where is Tauyasa now?”—“yasa now” cried the echo. He glared at the village policeman as if expecting him to answer, and lifted

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his clenched fist before him, twisting it slowly from side to side, and hissing from behind his teeth, "*Sa mongimongi tiko e na mbuka wanga*. He is squirming in the everlasting fire."

Thus ended Tauyasa, Reformer,—condemned in this world and the next, like his prototypes.

## A COOLIE PRINCESS.

“WE’RE to have about nine hundred of the Jumna lot on this plantation. They seem to be an average lot of coolies, seeing that Mauritius and Demarara get first pick—sweepings of the Calcutta jails, with a sprinkling of hillmen from Nepaul. They cost a trifle over twenty pounds a-head to introduce; but I ought not to grumble, as they’ve thrown the Princess into my batch. Not heard of the Princess? She’s a howling swell from Nepaul—nose-rings and bangles from head to foot—husband pretender to the throne of those parts—beheaded, drawn, and quartered for high treason—Princess saved by faithful retainer—just time to clap the contents of the family jewel-case on her body before the lord high executioner called—weeks in the saddle disguised as a man—flung herself upon the mercy of the recruiting agent, and breathlessly

pledged herself to work for ninepence a-day for five years trashing cane beyond the black water. That's *her* story, and she can show you the jewels and the faithful retainer to prove it."

"And do you think she'll work?"

"Can't say, not knowing much of the ways of princesses; but if she don't, you'll see her in your court under section thirty-four of the Principal Ordinance, which has no proviso for princesses, and then it will be your pleasing duty to make her work."

Then Onslow, the manager, rode off, leaving me to sign warrants for the batch of refractory coolies just sentenced.

In due course the "Jumna" batch were towed up the river in a sugar-punt, and turned loose into the new coolie lines. We could hear them at night settling down—a babel of strident voices, dominated at moments by a howling chant, with tom-tom accompaniment. A week later they had built in the verandah of the long building with partitions of empty kerosene and biscuit tins beaten flat. Filthy rags obscured every doorway; naked children were rolling in the sun-baked dust, and besmearing themselves with the fetid mud from the puddles of waste-water thrown out-

side the doors. There a wild-looking mother squatted in the shade, performing the last offices to the head of her youngest, while two older children leaned against her back playing with her lank greasy hair. A girl of five, with tiny silver bangles on arms and ankles, was gravely marching the length of the building, supporting on her head with one hand a brass bowl of smoking rice, while with the other she held up her long petticoat; and over all there were flies, and noise, and stench, and happiness enough for a twelvemonth's occupation. The new coolies were settling down. Somewhere in the building the Princess must have held her court, or perhaps she was in solitude learning "the sorrow's crown of sorrow."

Then the first tasks were set, and the trouble began. Friday's informations for absence from work rose from twenty-three to sixty-seven, and on Tuesday at ten o'clock a vast crowd of the accused and their sympathisers, curious and bewildered, disfigured the grass-plot at the court-house door. A burly Fijian constable was surveying them with a disgusted curl of the nostril, such as may be seen any Friday afternoon at the reptile-house of the Zoological Gardens. The luckless overseer had but one story to tell—of tasks set but not

attempted—light tasks, suitable for the new and inexperienced—five chains trashing Honolulu cane—no more. The pleas for the defence would have melted the heart of a wheel-barrow. “You are my father and my mother, but I am a stone-mason. The white sahib told me that I should work at my trade. I can build houses, but I cannot cut cane.”—“I am a goldsmith. I never said I would work in the fields.”—“What can I say? You are my judge. My belly is empty, and I cannot work,”—and so forth. They were discharged with a caution.

“That is all the men,” said the overseer; “the rest are women.”

“Arjuna!” cried the clerk.

“Arjuna!” repeated the Indian constable outside.

There was a pause.

“Is the woman here?” asked the interpreter impatiently.

“She is here,” returned the officer from without.

There followed sounds of persuasion, amounting almost to entreaty, such as are unusual from the mouths of minions of the law. Then when expectation had been wrought to the highest dramatic pitch, the sunlight from the door was darkened, and there burst

upon our dazzled gaze a vision of gold ornaments and gauzy draperies.

"The Princess," whispered the overseer, with a deprecating smile.

She was tall and willowy, and her slender limbs seemed to be weighed down with the burden of the bangles that almost hid them. Heavy gold circlets seemed to crush the tiny ankle-bones, and every slender toe was be-ringed. Besides earrings and the gold stud that emphasises the curve of the nostril, she wore no head ornaments, but the shawl that fell from her hair was of the finest striped gauze. She must have been fully twenty, but the brightness of her eyes was still undimmed by time. She surveyed the thatched courthouse with a glance of cool contempt, and walked proudly to the reed fence that did duty for a dock.

"You are charged with absence from work."

The Princess glanced sideways at the interpreter, and then stared straight at the beam over my head.

"She told the sirdar she didn't mean to do any work."

The evidence is interpreted to the accused.

"Has she anything to say?"

The interpreter might have put the question to the wall with as much result.

"Then tell her that she has come from India to work for five years, and work she must; if she does not, she will be punished, and eventually sent to jail, where she will be made to work."

The accused slightly raises her royal eyebrows.

"She is fined three shillings, or seven days' imprisonment."

At these words she turned round and beckoned to the bank of heads that had gradually filled the doorway. Four men broke from the group—Nepaulese by their looks—and came in. One of them, evidently the Keeper of the Privy Purse, making deep salaam, advanced to the clerk's table and dropped twelve three-penny bits upon it. The feelings of the interpreter at the coolness of the whole proceeding were too deep for words, and before he could translate his explosive English into the vernacular, the Princess had left the court with her suite. Then followed comments in Hindustani from without that filled Ramdas, the wizened Indian constable, with righteous indignation. Translated they were, "Call this a court-house? Why, it is made of grass! They should see the court-houses in India!"

For the next two weeks the Princess was known to



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the outer world by rumour only, which had it that she was scarcely behaving as a widowed Princess should behave. The Keeper of the Privy Purse had, it was said, been encouraged to aspire to the consort's chair, and the other Ministers were becoming jealous. Nor was this all. There were aspirants for royal favour outside the Ministry, who threatened to disorganise the household. Within the month her name reappeared in the charge-sheet. It was a second offence, and the fine was therefore heavier; but again her almoner satisfied the demands of the law. After that there was quiet for a space, because the suite took it in rotation to perform their mistress's task besides their own. There were even rumours of subscriptions among her sympathisers to buy out her indentures from the manager. But there came a change. Competition for royal favour must have become so keen, or the Princess herself must have behaved in so unroyal a manner, that a day came when the smouldering feuds in the household burst into flame, and there was something very like a riot. In the actions and counter-actions for assault brought by the men of Nepaul against one another, the royal name was bandied about very freely, and it became evident that

a part at least of her vassals had thrown off the yoke. Money, moreover, had been lent, and the borrower denied the debt, and brought four witnesses at a shilling a-head to counterbalance the plaintiff's four engaged at the same rate. Between the eight witnesses swearing irreconcilable opposites, the court had to decide whether money had passed or not. Then the wily old Ramdas, constable and priest, came softly to the bench and whispered into its ear, "S'pose me fetchum Kurân, dis feller no tellum lie; he too much 'fraid." Armed with authority, he left the court, going delicately, and presently returned on tiptoe, carrying on his extended hands a massive volume as if it was an overheated dish. Pausing before the table he said with due solemnity, "By an' by he kissum, dis feller he plenty 'fraid. Dis Kurân belonger me. Abdul Khan he sabe readim, me no sabe, on'y little bit, other feller he no sabe! On'y Abdul Khan sabe!" Then bending forward with bated breath he said, "He cost three pound twelve shillin' along Calcutta." His own reverence seemed doubled as he recalled the stupendous cost of the volume. Then with great ceremony he gave Joynauth the book and made him swear, laying it upon his head.

"Joynauth, did Benain give you this money?"

"Sahib, he did; with my eyes I saw him!"

Ramdas's excitement was great. He was going about the court-house on tiptoe, holding his sides with both hands, and blowing softly from his mouth.

"Dis feller no lie. He makim swear along Kurân, he too much 'fraid;" and he glared at the defendant triumphantly as who should say, "You are convicted, and mine is the hand that did it!"

The defendant was recalled. "Swear him too, Ramdas."

He paused in holy horror at carrying the awful test further.

"What for dis feller makim swear, sahib? Joynauth, he no lie, he *plenty* too much 'fraid."

"Swear him, Ramdas."

Threateningly he gave Benain the book, and the dread oath was administered.

"Benain, did you give Joynauth this money?"

"Sahib, he lies; I did not."

The shock to poor Ramdas's feelings was too great for words. He could only gasp, and dance from one foot to the other. "Oh," he cried at last, "one man he die very soon, one week, I think!" For it was evident

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that to one at least of the parties a Kurân that had cost three pound twelve in Calcutta was no more sacred than the book the Kafirs kissed. It mattered nothing to him what decision the court came to. He had simply to watch the stroke of doom fall, as fall it must, upon the perjurer. But two years have passed since that day, and both the witnesses survive, while a stroke of doom, if dismissal from the police force can be so called, has fallen upon Ramdas himself in connection with an adventure in which a bottle of spirits took a leading part. But Ramdas now touts for cases for a solicitor in coolie practice, and is a light and an expounder of the Scriptures to the faithful; and since both these occupations pay better than the police, perhaps he discerns the hand of Allah in his dismissal, and still awaits his vengeance upon the perjurer.

Since open feuds had weakened the ties of loyalty, the poor Princess found that she must either wound her slender hands with the sharp-edged leaves of the Honolulu cane for a slender pittance of ninepence a-day, or again figure in the charge-sheet. She chose the latter as being more in consonance with her dignity. In due course the blue paper that she refused to take was flung at her feet by a policeman, and

for the third time she underwent the ordeal of prosecution with a self-possession born of practice. This time—her third offence—no almoner would avail, for she was sentenced to fourteen days' hard labour without the option of a fine.

Ramdas would have pounced upon her and haled her forth as soon as the sentence was pronounced if he had not been restrained. The indignity of being herded with the other dirty and dishevelled female prisoners was enough without that. At daybreak the wooden station drums sounded for work, and the Princess's troubles began. It was Meli's daily triumph to muster the Indian prisoners in a row, and bring up the stragglers into their places with a jerk that audibly clashed their teeth together. These spindle-shanked, stinking coolies called him a bushman!—him, Meli, versed in all chiefly ceremonial, a bushman! Therefore should they know the strength of his arm. The women had sulkily taken their places in obedience to the peremptory command of their tormentor; but the Princess, herself accustomed to command, stood afar off under a clump of feathery bamboos, indifferently watching the scene.

“*Lako sara mai koiko.* You there! What are you

doing? You female roasted corpse! Come here. *Kotemiu!* (G—d d—n.) Come here, *vulari vulu*" (—fool).

The Princess regarded him with lazy curiosity. Then there was the sound of swift running, and as a falcon stoops to the trembling rabbit, so did Meli swoop down upon the now frightened Princess. There was the hurtling of a body through the air, a misty vision of flying draperies and shining gold, a clinking together of many metals, and the Princess was in her place in the line, dishevelled and bewildered, but in the finest rage that it had ever been Meli's fate to call down upon his woolly head. The storm burst, and all discipline was at an end. He succumbed without a murmur, knowing instinctively that to attempt to check such a torrent would bring down upon him the angry flood of thirteen other female tongues. His colleague left his gang in the bananas to look on, and the male prisoners threw down their hoes and peered, grinning, from among the broad shining leaves, to see his discomfiture. It is not necessary to repeat all the Princess said. Her past history, her present wrongs, her opinion of bushmen in general and Meli in particular, the glories of the Government of India, and the infamy of the

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Government of the colony, were all exhaustively discussed in language more forcible than elegant. Long after Meli had hustled her companions off to their work, she was still declaiming in a voice that cut the ear like a knife. But when she became conscious that her audience had dwindled to five grinning native prisoners who did not understand her, the outbursts of eloquence became spasmodic, and at last she fell back upon the jail to brood over her wrongs. Then Meli's courage returned to him, and, armed with a murderous-looking weeding-knife, he followed her to her lair. In two minutes, loudly protesting, she found herself sitting on the grass path with her fingers forcibly closed upon the handle of the knife, which, resist as she would, cut the grass before her with the superior force of Meli's arm. When left to herself she furiously flung the knife into the bananas, and wept tears of impotent rage. But the native warder, who sat perched on the fork of a dead tree watching the male prisoners as they weeded the bananas, took no notice of her, and so she dried her tears and fell to watching him as he threw stone after stone from the pile in his lap with unerring aim at the prisoners guilty of shirking their work.

But later in the day two Nepaulese, aspirants for court favour, appeared on the scene and energetically cut the grass set for their liege-lady's task, while she sat listless and indifferent, condescending now and again to pluck with her slender fingers a single blade of grass, with an insolent affectation of satisfying the requirements of the law, whenever the official eye fell upon her. She may have plucked thirty blades of grass in the working day, perhaps not quite so many; but it was much to have vindicated the discipline of the jail, and more to have made the Princess do any work at all. Her spirit was so far broken, and the romance of her story may be said to have ended here.

Coolies may buy out their indentures for a round sum, and by some means this sum was raised among her admirers. There were burglaries in the neighbourhood about that time; and one indeed of the suite was arrested on suspicion by the European sergeant of police, who said as usual, when called upon to produce evidence, "It's a well-known fact that he's a noted scoundrel, and I submit to your worship that that's evidence."



## LEONE OF NOTHO.

“**I**Ë, Setariki, how long did the foreigner say that I must stay bound? Until the month January? That is, after the day of the New Year, and there are four moons to set till then. It is always the way of the Government—wait, wait—till the bones of those who wait crumble away. If I *must* die, let me die now, Setariki. I told the foreigner in the court that I slew the woman, and the payment is death; therefore, where is the use of waiting? You are a policeman and know the law?” •

“The law is this—that you be judged in the Great Court that is held but four times every year. Na-vosa-vakadua [He-who-speaks-once] will judge you, and the foreigners in turbans of sheepskin will dispute and quarrel about you in their own tongue, so that you cannot understand, and the witnesses will swear to speak

the truth, and will make all things plain; but one of the foreigners with sheepskin on their heads will ask them many questions to entrap them, and speak angrily to them, seeking to hide the truth, so that their senses will fly from them for fear, and they will lie, and the truth be darkened. Thus did Manoa escape, and that other woman who drowned the white man, although they themselves bore witness that they had done the thing of which they were accused. But they were women, and you, being a man, I greatly fear that you will not escape. The ways of the foreigners are strange, and you cannot understand them; but I, being a policeman in the service of the Government, understand them all; and this I know, Leone, that it is better to be judged in the Great Court, where the judge knows nothing of our tongue, than in the court of the province; for in the Great Court there is much disputing and much darkening of the truth, so that many of the guilty escape."

"Nay, Setariki; even though they darken the truth until none shall know it from the false, yet cannot I escape, for I have told the bald-headed magistrate that I slew Lusiana."

"The foreigners I have told you of, whose business it

is to twist the truth—*loya* they are called—will come to you in the prison, and teach you how to lie before the court, and will even lie themselves on your behalf if you will first give them money. The Indians do this every day, feeding these *loya* with money, and they in return save the Indians from the law. Therefore send to your relations to gather money together for the *loya*. Send to Vita, who has the rent of your land where the store is; tell him not to spend that money, but to sell copra to add to it. Now tell me the manner of the accusation.”

“What is there to tell? I am Leone of Notho, of the fishermen clan. I did in truth slay the woman Lusiana my wife. It fell thus. I gave the marriage gifts, and my house was built as the law requires; then I took her and we were married. This was ten Sabbaths ago. She was of good report, and none knew aught to her dishonour, so that I feared no other man when I took her to be my wife. She was a woman of a mild spirit and obedient, and I rejoiced greatly in her. Then, one night as we lay upon the one mat under the screen, I, being nearly asleep, heard a tapping upon the bread-fruit tree that grew near the door—such as a *sese* makes with its beak upon a

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branch when it eats grasshoppers, only louder; and as I lay wondering what it might be, the sound came again, and from the mat where Lusiana lay there was the sound of tapping as if in answer, but very softly; and I, feigning sleep, breathed heavily, but turned my eyes towards her. Now a lamp was burning in the house, but it was turned low, for the kerosene was nearly dry, and I had no shillings. She seemed to be asleep, but when the tapping sounded again I saw the screen shake, for she had her left arm extended beneath it, and was tapping on the mat with the ends of her fingers. Then I lay very still to see what would happen, and presently she rose softly and crawled out of the screen to the fireplace as if to light her *suluka* from the embers. After a little she went softly to the door and out; and I, fearing some evil, rose and went swiftly out by another door, taking my clearing-knife from the leaves as I passed. The moon shone brightly. And as I looked from the corner of the house I saw Lusiana, my wife, standing in the shadow of the bread-fruit with a man, who spoke earnestly to her as if to draw her away. Then my blood flowed down in my body, and I came upon them suddenly, and the man fled, but I knew

him in the moonlight for Airsai the village constable. But the woman stood and looked at the ground. And I said, 'Who is that man? Is this your habit when I am lying asleep?' But she looked always at the ground, and would not answer. Then my anger increased, and I said, 'Answer me, answer, you light woman!' But she still was silent. Then I took her by the hand to lead her to the house—I swear to you that I only meant to lead her to the house,—but she resisted me, and tried to draw away her hand from mine. Then I let her go, and great rage entered into me. 'Will you neither speak nor come with me?' I shouted. But the woman stood with her back to me, still looking at the ground. And a great strength came upon me, and the knife in my hand became lighter than a reed, and I swung it once in the air, making it hiss, and crying, 'Speak, woman!' Then I struck—and her head being bowed, I struck the neck at the back where it looked red in the moonlight that shone between the bread-fruit leaves. The knife paused not, but shore through all, for it was a mighty blow; and the head rolled to the foot of the tree, turning the sand black, and the body sank down where it stood, and struck my knees, spurting blood. Thus

my *sulu* and my legs and feet were all wet. Then I cried for the others to come and see what I had done, and they all came running: first the women, chattering like parrots at sunset, then the men and children, and last of all the village policeman, Airsai. And they took the knife from me, and one brought a clean *sulu* and put it on me, taking mine to show to the courts; and they went with me to the river to wash the blood from my legs. But when they would ask me questions, I said, 'Peace! I slew Lusiana. Bind me.' So they bound my hands with sinnet, and brought me hither, not resisting, for the woman deserved to die."

"Is that all, Leone?"

"That is all. But one thing is clear, that I cannot escape the law."

"Nay! Take rest for your mind, Leone. I know a foreigner in the town—a *loya*—who is skilled in the law, being wont to dispute in the courts. Of late few have paid him money to dispute, and he is hungry for money—for foreigners eat money as we eat yams. For him, skilled as I have said, it will be easy to darken the truth of this thing so that the judge cannot find it, and will doubt whether it was Airsai

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who slew the woman, or you, or whether she slew herself, or whether, indeed, she was slain at all. Such things has he done for others, and this he will do for you too, if you but pay him sufficient money before the trial."

## RALUVE.

VERE did not tell me the story himself. He does not talk about his past; but squalid as his life is, he cannot help looking like a man with a history, albeit unkempt and half-starved in the struggle to keep his half-caste brats from want. Hoskins, the father of district magistrates, is my authority. He saw no pathos in it, only thought it "an awful pity"; but years of tinned provisions are apt to dull the sense of poetry in any man.

Vere was the usual kind of younger son who leaves a public school with more knowledge of field-sports than Latin, and having passed the limit of age for the army, straightway joins the hosts of unemployed whose ultimate refuge is the States or the Colonies. Unlike most of the young gentlemen who graduate at an army crammer's, Vere had no vices, and when his



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turn came to tackle station-life in Australia, he found no temptation to take the usual downward plunge, but hated the life with all his heart. His letters home brought him unexpected relief. The Colonial Office was asked to find a few young men to recruit the Civil Service of a South Sea colony, and Vere, in common with half-a-dozen others, was appointed, through the medium of a friendly chief clerk.

He was kept at headquarters just long enough to wear off the novelty, and to wonder why English-speaking mankind, especially when they hail from Australia, succeed so wonderfully in stamping out all that is picturesque from their surroundings; and then he was sent to Commissioner Austin to be instructed in the mysteries of the native language and customs, until such time as he should be fit for the responsibilities of a Commissioner himself. Now Mr Commissioner Austin was not a gentleman to be entrusted with the care of youth, and to do him justice, he was the last person in the world to desire such a responsibility. The Government had taken him over with the other fixtures of a former *régime*, and if he had any belongings for whom he ever cared, he had long ago forgotten them. In his own province the Com-

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missioner was a very great man indeed—that is to say, the natives grunted at him when he passed, clapped their hands after touching his, and generally left his presence smacking that part of the human frame that is held in least esteem. But the law of the honour paid to prophets is reversed in the islands, and the Commissioner found that his importance in the social scheme sensibly diminished with every mile from the boundaries of his district, and had therefore allowed his visits to the capital to become very rare. Vere found the great man affable and not inhospitable. “You will stay with me until you can make your own arrangements,” he said; and Vere, not caring to prolong his visit upon such terms, though he had nothing with him but his clothes, lost no time in invoking the good offices of a friendly storekeeper. With his help he found himself in a few days established in a small native house, belonging to a petty chief, without a stick of furniture but the mats that belonged to his landlord, and a mosquito-screen. He wanted nothing more. The mats, with dried grass under them, were soft enough to sleep on, and the floor was cooler and more comfortable than any chair. For the first few days he attended the office regularly in the

hope of finding work to do, but his chief never seemed to want him. "No, thanks, Mr Vere, not to-day. This work would be a little beyond you. Perhaps you could not do better than work at the language." Vere realised later on that the Commissioner had the best of reasons for not finding work for him. He had not enough for himself. There were no coolies in his district, and the native magistrates disposed of the court work. So Vere worked at the language in the only effective way—that is, he spent day after day with his landlord's family fishing from a canoe, diving for *figota*, and drinking *yangona*. He bathed in a stream a few yards from his hut, and had his meals with his native landlord or with a neighbouring store-keeper. The life was too new to be monotonous.

One night as he was dropping off to sleep on his mats, tired out with doing nothing all day, he heard the distant note of a conch-shell mingled with the eternal murmur of the reef. "Turtle-fishers returning with a big bag," he thought, trying to remember what natives blow conch-shells for, and turned over on the other side. But presently distant voices, as of people aroused and hurrying, awoke the lazy curiosity of one bound to study native customs. A light breeze from

the sea was rustling the great palm-leaves like heavy curtains, and though the moon had set, the stars gave light enough to show the dim outline of the rocky island near the anchorage. A light was creeping in towards the beach, and he could just make out the huge triangular sail of a double canoe. Then a hoarse voice from the canoe shouted to the people who were assembling on the beach. Immediately, with a deep exclamation, the babble of voices ceased, and every figure squatted as if by word of command. Two or three men ran off into the village, and Vere drew near the group in the hope of finding some one to explain the situation. He soon found his landlord, who, in pidgin English, told him that the dusky potentate who had despoiled the district for many years had gone to his own place, and that his son reigned in his stead, and had come to receive their homage. The men who had run to the town came back with whale's teeth, and as the canoe grated on the coral sand the grey-headed village chief squatted with his feet in the sea, and gave the deep grunt of respect, and delivered in low voice a rapid and unintelligible harangue. The crew sprang into the water, and standing waist-deep, dragged the canoe through the yielding sand until her

prow rested above the dry beach, and the old man, still squatting, gave the whale's teeth, hanging in a bunch, to the new-comers. A fire of dead palm-leaves threw a red glare upon the brown faces and glistening bodies of the strangers as they disembarked. A tall young man, evidently the new chief, was the first. He was followed by a number of men and women, who stood aside to wait for another woman who now rose from the little thatched house on the deck. From her bearing, and the respect paid to her, Vere saw she was to be classed far above any he had yet seen. The chief seemed to ask in a whisper who the strange white man was, and learning probably that he was a Government officer, stopped to shake hands with him. The girl stopped too, and looked at Vere as if expecting to be spoken to; but before he could take her hand, she hurried off after the others. They were followed by the whole village into the deep shadow of the palms, and Vere was left alone with the dying fire to watch the crew of the canoe making her snug for the night.

Vere heard all about the new arrivals next day. Of Nambuto he had heard before, a good deal that was discreditable, as is natural and proper to a young leader

of the people. The girl was all that an epidemic of measles had left of a line of chiefs beside whom the present rulers of the district were *parvenus*. Weakened by the ravages of the disease that had thinned out his fighting men, her father had succumbed to the chief who was just dead, and both conquerors and conquered had agreed that *Andi* Raluve should heal the hereditary quarrel by marrying Nambuto, the eldest son of the victor. It was a tribal matter, and in tribal matters women have no voice, least of all when they are of rank.

The villagers seemed to take their loss with much philosophy. They cut their hair and beards, it is true, and there was a run on black cashmere in the nearest store, but they wasted no time in vain regrets for one whose lightest word a week ago they would have tremblingly obeyed. They devoted all their energies instead to the entertainment of the living. Long-nosed slab-sided pigs were dragged by the hind-legs to the ovens, protesting indignantly, until a few dull thuds clearly explained the situation to them; and Vere's friends chopped wood, butchered, and cooked under a dense cloud of flies as if their lives depended on their activity. Vere, driven to walk by himself,

was idling about near the sea, thinking how a native canoe, improved on, would be an ideal sailing craft, when he came suddenly upon a figure sitting under a great *dilo*-tree, bent almost double, and shaking with convulsive sobs. Now the natives of these islands are not given to displaying whatever emotions they have, and seeing that the figure was a woman's, all his English chivalry was startled into life; so, forgetting that she could not understand him, he stooped down, saying, "What is the matter? Can't I do anything for you?" In the tear-stained face that looked up he recognised Raluve, the lady of the previous night, her big black eyes round with surprise. Reassured by his evident concern, she gave him rapidly and in a low voice what might have been an explanation of her distress, but as it was in her own dialect, he understood not one word of it. With a desperate effort he plunged into Fijian. "If you are in trouble I will help you," is not a difficult nor complicated sentence in any language. He attempted it, and the result exceeded his expectations, for the girl struggled a moment, and then burst into ringing peals of laughter. Evidently he had used the wrong word, and this girl's manners were no better than any other savage's. But she got up as he

began to move off, and before they reached the village she had promised to teach him her language.

Next morning he received a visit of ceremony. His door was darkened, there was a whispering and a rustling outside, and then Raluve came in, shyly followed by two attendants of discreet age and mature charms. She sank gracefully on the mats, doubling her feet under her, and the matrons giggled. There was a constrained pause. Clearly this girl could not be amused by the exhibition of a cunningly devised knife or an alarum-clock. Desperately he fell back on photographs. Raluve took each one, looked at it indifferently, and handed it to the nearest duenna, who, being skittish, gazed at it upside down, and poked her companion in the ribs, chuckling immoderately. But the photographs required explanations, and then the lesson began in earnest; for every remark Vere hazarded was first severely corrected, and then criticised by the two frolicsome dames, with vast amusement to themselves. The system of education was primitive, but it satisfied both pupil and mistresses.

If her chaperones were flighty, Raluve showed by contrast a deportment austere correct. She was





*"And then Ralure came in, shyly followed by two attendants of discreet age and mature charms."*



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by nature and training an aristocrat—well versed in the traditions of her race, which included the belief in a natural gulf fixed between her own and the lower orders, and a vast contempt for the vulgarity of gush. She had been educated on a mission station, where she learned to take an intelligent interest in something beyond getting up linen, and the latest scandal. Now reserve, intelligence, and the manners of a lady are so rare a combination in a native, that the callow Vere began to fill up the blanks in her character in his own way, and to miss the lessons on the days she failed to come, more than he cared to confess to himself. Not many men can use the eyes God gave them without enlarging or belittling, unless they have the loan of others' eyes to correct their vision by. Some do indeed succeed in viewing life through the wrong end of the telescope, and in enjoying it hugely ; but the majority unscrew the lens and gaze on a new world—rocky mountains made of dust-specks, trodden by ants as elephants. Vere, the solitary, was beginning to idealise the natives, and it is all up with the man who does that, since, for some occult reason, it is in the feminine side of the race that the finer qualities

are discovered. He was startled to find out for himself that this brown-skinned girl thought and spoke much in the same way as did girls with white skins, with the only difference that she was more natural and *naïve*. He found himself confiding his worries past and present to her, and asking her advice. He liked her ready sympathy, and her healthy good sense, and her sense of humour amused him ; and when, after three weeks of almost daily companionship, he heard it hinted that she would soon leave the island, he knew that she had become a companion whom he would miss very much indeed.

During these three weeks Nambuto, after the manner of his kind, had been eating up the land, and he was in no hurry to go away. But a time comes when the slaughter of pigs and fowls has an end, and at the village meeting the *mata-ni-ranua*, whose duty it was to apportion each man's contribution to the daily feast, pointed out that that time had arrived. Besides a couple of elderly sows, on whom their hopes of a future herd were centred, nothing remained to kill. An intimation must be conveyed to their haughty guest. Now it is a fine thing to be a chief in these happy isles. Rank and

riches in civilised communities entail responsibilities. We are even told on high authority that the rich are as unlikely to enjoy happiness in this life, as they are certain to lose it in the next, which, to say the least of it, would be rather hard upon the well-to-do if they had not the remedy in their own hands. But a chief in these islands enjoys not only his own wealth, but his subjects' besides, and has neither responsibility nor that product of civilisation called a conscience to trouble him. He does not sleep less soundly for fear the crushed worm may turn. The crushing was done too effectually for that some generations ago.

Nambuto wore his new responsibilities lightly. They seemed to consist chiefly in consuming the food brought to him by his uncomplaining and despised hosts, who, if they ever came as visitors to his island, would be kept from starvation by his vassals. But comfortable though he was, his visit had to be curtailed owing to the natural difficulty in reanimating pigs and fowls that have been cooked and eaten. The morning's presentation of food had been meagre, and the excuse that the land was in famine was conveyed to Nambuto's household. There was no help

for it. The great canoe was unburied from the pile of leaves that had sheltered it from the burning sun, and hauled down to the water's edge; the great mat sail was spread upon the sand, while deft fingers replaced the broken threads with new sinnet; and the word went forth that she would put to sea when next the wind was fair.

Raluve came earlier than usual that morning, and, to Vere's surprise, alone. She walked straight up to the chair where he was sitting, and said, "I have come to take leave."

"Why, where are you going to?" he asked.

"To our land. And I must take leave quickly, lest they be angry with me for coming."

She spoke hurriedly—almost roughly—and held out her hand with averted face. Vere sprang to his feet, and slammed the door of his hut.

"You can't go like this, Raluve, until I know all about it. Why didn't you tell me yesterday?"

"It is Nambuto's decision. I have only just been told. But the canoe is all prepared, and they will sail to-day, for the wind is fair."

Vere felt bitterly disappointed. He had almost forgotten that her mind, like the colour of her skin, must

be different from his. He had taken her seriously, and made a chum of her, and here she was going back to her own people without a word of regret. He now remembered how one-sided their intimacy had been. She had listened patiently to all his confidences, but had told him nothing about herself in return. Well, it had been a pleasant dream, and of course it was common-sense that the awakening must come. What could he, an educated Englishman, have to do with her, the future wife of a savage? This was not even to be his adopted country. Of course he must say good-bye to her, and let his dream fade into the squalid reality of his life. But he felt angry with himself and her.

“Why should they be angry with you?” he asked indifferently, as he put out his hand.

“Because my people are like beasts,” she answered indignantly, “and there have been many words about us, and Nambuto is angry, and has spoken evil to me. Look! I will hide nothing from you.” And then she told him her whole story, lapsing into her own dialect in her excitement, so that he could not follow her: how she had been betrothed to Nambuto against her will; how Vere was the only friend she had ever had, for the

men of her nation knew not what friendship with a woman could be; how she would now have to go with them, and be insulted by them all, with none to protect her, or be her friend.

"*Isa*," she cried, "you are a white man, and know everything, and I am a black woman and ignorant: tell me of some medicine, that I may drink and die! I cannot bear my life."

Then all Vere's better qualities rose to drag him down. All the chivalry in him was stirred. He was not going to see this girl bullied, and on his account. Whatever the consequences might be, he must protect her. A worse man would have wisely reflected that native customs are best left alone, and that, after all, the prospect painted by Raluve was not so very terrible—for a native woman. But prudence does not wed with youth, and to Vere, who had already begun to lose the sense of proportion, her fate seemed horrible. The average man needs one month in the great world for every five in the islands to correct his perspective, and to realise the utter insignificance of himself and his surroundings, otherwise he will infallibly come to believe that it matters whether or not the coral foundations of the islands crumble away, and the whole



colony, executive machinery and all, go to the bottom of the Pacific in the next hurricane.

Vere's fluency astonished himself. He found the words without looking for them. The figure at his feet on the mats was so limp and helpless, so hard to reassure by comforting words, that he threw aside all caution in his promises. So they sat on till the pattern of the sunlight through the reed walls crept across the floor-mats, and began to climb the opposite wall, dyeing Raluve's bowed head with red gold streaks. Suddenly they heard a woman's voice in the road calling her name, and in another moment one of her women looked in at the door breathless, saying, "I am dead of looking for you. The chief sent me. We sail to-morrow, and it is his word that you come at once."

Raluve looked at Vere appealingly. "There will be much anger shown to me," she said; "how shall it be? Am I to go?"

We never know the turning-points in our lives at the time; and so Vere, following that which supplies healthy-minded men with a substitute for a conscience, his own inclination—said, "Do not go. If they are angry come to me."

When she had gone and the light had faded, he

began to feel very uncomfortable. He had encouraged her in resisting her own people, and he was, after all, quite powerless to prevent them from ill-treating her. Ugly stories crossed his mind of the doings of the old heathen days, of the outrage and torture inflicted even on women when they resisted the chiefs. Perhaps even at that very moment the storm was breaking on her. The suspense was becoming unbearable when he heard a smothered cough at the door. In the dim light a woman pushed a crumpled note into his hand and vanished into the darkness. It was Raluve's first letter to him. The writing was in pencil, childish but clear, for Raluve had been taught by the missionary's wife.

"I am most pitiable," she wrote. "Nambuto has spoken evil of me before our people and the people of this place, and I am despised. But this is nothing, for they sail to-morrow. Only I fear lest they do something to me by force, and I go to hide in the forest. I will come back when they return. And another thing, Nambuto spoke evil of you also. I send my love to you.—R."

Next morning there was a hue and cry. The canoe was afloat, and laden with such of the low-borns'



*"The canoe was afloat, and laden with such of the low-borns' household gods as their aristocratic visitors thought worth taking away."*



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household gods as their aristocratic visitors thought worth taking away. The mat-sail was bent, and ready to be hoisted, but Raluve was nowhere to be found. The palm-groves around the village resounded with her name, and four of the crew of the canoe even went so far as to stand shouting her name in front of Vere's house. This was hard to bear. Then one of them struck up in a sing-song tone an extempore verse, which the rest received with a burst of coarse laughter. This too was very hard to bear. Then another cried, "Lady Raluve, are there not white men in our own land?" And this being too hard to be borne, the wit saw the flash of white clothes, and found himself dazed upon his back in the grass, with the sensation of having had his face crushed in, while his three companions were in full flight up the road. And Vere returned to his hut relieved in feelings, but with a curious sense of having been degraded to a lower rank of humanity where he stood upon the same level with half-naked savages who wrangle and fight over their women. Two hours later, his fat good-natured landlord, passing his door, volunteered the information that the canoe had sailed. Being a wise man, he said nothing about the missing

girl, the great topic of village scandal, and thereby earned Vere's confidence.

Now it is not to be supposed that Raluve could escape from annoyance with the departure of her people. These happy isles are no more free from the love of scandal than is civilised Europe. A people endowed with the love of social converse, and without any legitimate object for discussion, naturally falls back upon the topics most dear to the frequenters of small European watering-places. Such a prize as the reputation of a chief woman, hitherto unsmutched, to tear to pieces, would not glut the carrion-crows of this small district for many weeks. And with the knowledge that Raluve had earned her chief's displeasure, all respect for her rank vanished; for they shared with a certain class of society journal the gloating triumph that only rank and character tottering from its pedestal can properly awaken. So when Raluve quietly returned to the village to take up her abode with the chief's wife, she found that it would need all her strength to live the scandal down. Deeply wounded as she was to find that by her own act she had earned the scorn of a people she had been trained to despise, her courage soon returned to her, and she gave back

scorn for scorn. But she lived on with her one friend, the village chief's wife, a woman of her own island and her own clan; and as the days passed, and the scandal became stale, she began to take her proper place among them.

Vere was not allowed to escape scathless. The village scandal had of course leaked out among the few Europeans of the place, and as they were precluded from comparing notes with one another, not being on speaking terms for the most part, each one supplied the details according to the richness of his individual fancy. The principal storekeeper's wife told her daughter that he was an unprincipled young man; and the damsel, having heard all the details from her native *confidante*, who did the family washing, examined Vere as he passed with redoubled interest. The missionary bowed coldly, and his wife cut him dead. But, worst of all, Commissioner Austin felt it his duty to have his say in a stammering speech, which began, "I don't pretend to be a particularly moral man myself, but——" and got no further, because Vere, who knew very well what was coming, was short in the temper, and replied with heat, "Mr Austin, I am a *very* moral man, and I always mind my own business," which, as

a rejoinder, was coarse and unwarrantable, and offended his well-meaning chief past redemption. He felt very sore and angry with the world that chose to regard what he felt to be the fruit of his nobler self as a mere boyish escapade, and he hardened his heart into a defiant resolve to keep his promise to Raluve, and let the world say what it pleased. Probably if the world had left them alone, or if either of them had been a coward, Vere would not have become—well, what he now is.

The next six weeks taught Vere some new things. He learned, for instance, that a brown-skinned girl has much the same kind of heart inside her as her white sisters; that, when in love, she will say and do all that has been said or done by a highly civilised woman, save only that she is more simple, and less tamed by conventionality; that love counts no cost, and asks only to be free from artificial restraint, and utterly careless of the future. His life for the past six weeks had been like some perfect dream that fears no awakening. Memories of home, the throb of the great world, the ambitions of his boyhood, touched him like the murmur in the ears of one who, standing in some silent wood, seems to hear the roar of the city he has



just left. How often in a lifetime can any of us pause and say, "This is perfect; I ask for nothing more"? We can no doubt remember many perfect moments in our lives, because we have forgotten the little vexations,—that we had the toothache, and our account was overdrawn; for it is the petty worries and the cares of civilised life that prevent our happy moments from being quite perfect. The *tempo felice* was never quite so happy as we think, nor the *miseria* quite so wretched. But Vere's life was happy enough to be worth paying for. He had met Raluve every day, and had come to look on life as quite impossible without her. Sometimes they had met at a trysting-place of Raluve's choosing in the forest, where a great *tavola*-tree barred the entrance into a narrow gorge in the hills. Sometimes they had wandered on moonlight nights along the sandy beach; and once Raluve had plunged, laughing, into the warm sea, daring him to follow her, and had swam to the little islet that lay a few hundred yards from the shore. But once, as they sat talking beneath the *tavola*-tree, Raluve had clutched his arm, listening to some distant sound, and a few moments later a man had crashed through the underwood and stopped a few yards from the tree, hidden from them by the great

trunk. Then Vere prepared himself for battle, but the intruder crashed off again in another direction. Thereafter Raluve declared their trysting-tree unsafe, and the island became their regular place of meeting. There had once been a house on the point, but nothing was left to mark the spot but a number of oleander-trees, and a patch of couch-grass which the sheep had trimmed down. Here at least they were safe from intrusion, for they could see any boat upon the starlit strait that divided them from the shore long before it could land. And to make their safety surer, they swam off independently after night had fallen. Vere told the girl the story of Hero and Leander, and she thereafter would laughingly wave a smouldering branch among the oleanders as a signal to Vere to bind his clothes on his head and swim across to her.

But the awakening came at last. One morning a cutter anchored bringing the mails from headquarters. Besides his usual home letters, there was an oblong official envelope addressed to him. The letter was short. Somebody had the honour to request that he would report himself at headquarters at his earliest convenience, with the view of taking up an appointment as magistrate of another district. So here was

his promotion before he expected it. Three months ago it would have delighted him, now it seemed the worst misfortune that could befall him. To leave this place meant giving up Raluve, for it was out of the question that she could go with him, unless he caused a scandal that would cost him his appointment. And yet what prevented him from shaping his life as he chose? He had only desired promotion to shorten the time of his exile, and life with Raluve was no longer like exile, for he had eaten of the lotus, and the smell of the reef had entered into his soul.

Never did the sea seem so cold, nor the island so distant, as on that night. A light rain was falling, and the smell of the oleander-flowers was carried to Vere by the light wind as he swam; and while he waded ashore shivering, Raluve came out from the shadows to meet him.

"E Kalokalo, I am dead with waiting. I waved my brand, but you did not see it, and now it has gone out. And I began to fear, thinking of the woman you told me of, who saw her lover's dead body washed up at her feet."

"Am I late? I was reading letters that the cutter brought—letters from *papalangi*."

“From your own people? E Kalokalo, you have never told me of them. Some day they will make you throw me aside, and you will take a *marama* of your own land to wife.”

“What is this foolishness, Raluve? Who has put foolish words into your mouth?”

“I thought they were foolish words, but now I know they are true. Alikā——”

“Alikā is a foolish old woman. What did she tell you?”

“She said, ‘Raluve, this white man loves you. You are fortunate, for the white men love better than our men; but for all that he will leave you, and return to his own people, taking one of them in marriage.’ And when I grew angry she said, ‘Did Kaiatia keep Lui, the German, though she bore him two children? And why does Alisi go about Lakeba like a hen with half her feathers plucked out?’ Then I knew that her words were true; for Lui has a white woman for wife now, and Alisi was beaten by her people because of Tomu, the trader, and he left her, saying he would return, and did not. And one day you will leave *me*, Kalokalo.”

Vere said nothing, feeling her eyes upon him in the dim light.

"But I will know whether it shall be so," she went on. "Sit down: no, not there on the grass, but on the sand. Now see," she said, taking up an empty coconut shell, "when I spin this cup it shall fall toward one of us. If it falls toward you, then you will leave me, and marry one of your people; and if it fall toward me—— See, it spins. *Mana dina!* Ah, faithless one, it topples like Kata, the kava-drinker!"

The shell reeled, lurched, and fell toward the girl, rolling away on its side from between them. Raluve's hands fell to her side.

"Nay; but the shell spoke the truth," said Vere, laughing.

But the girl had become serious.

"It is a heathen game, and we ought not to have done it, therefore it lied. And if you doubt that it lied, I will take a Bible to-morrow, and swear that I will never leave you. Then if I swear falsely, I shall die as Ana did, when she swore she did not burn down Finau's house. But you will leave me, and it is right; for you are my chief, and I am a black woman, and I could not bear that you should be despised by your people because of me. What is she like, Kalokalo?"

"Who?"

“The woman you will marry. She must be a great lady like the Governor’s wife, not like the *maramas* of Levuka, who are angry, and have harsh voices. I hate them: but you would never take one of them?”

“And what would you do if I married, Raluve?”

“I would be your wife’s servant if she would let me; but if you left me for one of my own people——” She caught her breath, and half-started up. He thought she was excited by her own speech, but her face was set, and her body tense. She was listening. “Somebody is coming,” she whispered. Vere strained his ears, but could hear nothing but the faint hiss of the sand as the tiny waves sucked it back.

“I hear nothing,” he said.

She put her hand on his mouth, and rose upon her knees, looking seawards. After some seconds she stooped.

“There are no other double canoes but Nambuto’s. I can hear the *sua*, four of them, therefore it is a double canoe. They are sculling against the wind, and may land here. Come, let us swim across.”

But while Vere still hesitated, scarcely believing her, the quiet air was pierced by the deep note of a conch-shell from the sea.

"It is Nambuto," she said, excitedly. *Vonu?* No, they do not blow like that for *vonu*" (turtle).

It was too late to think of swimming ashore. In another moment the beach would be alive with men. Raluve drew Vere back into the shadow of the olean-  
ders, and made him lie down lest his white face should be seen. He could see her crouching at the edge of the sand. Gradually he began to distinguish a dull rhythmical beat, and the girl drew back into the shadow. The sound grew louder, and then he saw a dark mass emerging from the night, which took the shape of a great canoe, creeping inshore against the light land-breeze which had just sprung up. It glided on noiselessly, save for the rhythmical blow of the *sua* as they rocked from side to side in the sockets, while the figures of the four scullers stood out in sharp *silhouette* against the sky-line. It passed so close to the point of the island that Vere could have thrown a biscuit on to the deck, and could hear every word spoken by those on board. When it had passed on to the beach, Vere realised how great had been the strain to Raluve.

"Nambuto is there; I heard his voice. What shall I do?"

It seemed a small matter to Vere whether Nambuto came back or not. He could not realise that this girl by his side, who thought and spoke so rationally, was still one of her own people, bound to fear what they feared, and to respect the customs that had become stronger than law to them. That she, an affianced chief woman, should prefer a white man to a man of her own race, was as great a social crime as it would be were a countrywoman of ours to tolerate an Indian rajah.

Meanwhile the party had landed from the canoe, and the voices on the beach were silent. Raluve thought she had heard her name called in the direction of Vere's house; but they waited until the cocks had crowed in the village, and a few sleepy birds had begun twittering in the trees on the island. It was the safest hour for their return: the natives, roused in the night, would sleep late that morning. Still Raluve feared to take a direct course to the shore, and, calling to Vere to follow her, waded through the shallow water and struck out, steering a diagonal course towards the shore opposite Vere's house. The water was brilliantly phosphorescent, and her body seemed to be clothed in polished silver as she swam.



Every stroke of her arms and feet scattered a shower of diamonds that flashed a moment and vanished in the black water; and from before her hundreds of fish, taking her for an enemy, shot away, leaving a dull train of fire behind them like shooting-stars in a dark sky. It was a long swim, for it was high tide; but as they waded ashore, tired and out of breath, the beach seemed deserted. There was only the dark shelter of the trees to be gained, and they were safe. They stopped a moment on the sand to put on the clothes they had tied round their heads, and then hurried up towards the trees. But before they reached them there was a shout from the bush just in front of them, answered by two voices further off in different directions.

"They have seen us," said Raluve, hurriedly. "Run away, Kalokalo. I will wait for them here."

But Vere had no idea of running away, and stood his ground by her side. There was the sound of a man crashing through the bushes, and a native ran into the open and stood before them. It was Nambuto.

There was silence for some moments. Raluve stood facing him with heaving breast, while Vere clenched his fists, and drew nearer to her. The chief broke the

silence with the most insulting word in his language. Vere did not understand the word, but the man's tone and Raluve's passionate indignation were enough for him.

"You scoundrel!" he cried in English from between his set teeth; "how dare you speak to her like that?"

Nambuto, expecting a blow, put up both hands to defend his face, and Vere, mistaking the gesture in the dim light, thought he was about to strike him. In a moment Nambuto was reeling backwards, stunned with a heavy blow between the eyes, and as he fell he shouted a few words at the top of his voice.

"Run, Raluve, and hide yourself," cried Vere.

"Come with me," she answered; "he has called his men, and they will kill you."

She tried to drag him into the trees, for they could hear voices and the crashing of the undergrowth, as Nambuto's men ran in the direction of their chief's voice.

"Run and hide yourself," cried Vere again, excitedly pushing her into the shadow of the trees. He had just time to reach the trunk of a great *dilo*-tree, and put his back against it, when five men ran out on to the beach where Nambuto sat rubbing his eyes as if stupefied.

“Seize the white man!—he has struck me,” he cried.

They came upon Vere cautiously, for he was a formidable object for unarmed natives to tackle. “Quick, a stick,” cried one, and ran to pick up a rough worm-eaten piece of drift-wood. He dodged the first blow and knocked down one of them, who tried to run in under his guard, but the second blow struck his shoulder, and he fell. Before he could rise they were upon him, trampling and stamping the breath out of his body. But help was near. Raluve had run to the nearest house, and it was that of Vere’s landlord and particular friend. But she outstripped him, and was among Vere’s assailants, raging like a tigress, long before he came up. It is no easy matter to quiet savages when their blood is once up; but her prestige among them was still great, and one after another they slunk off before her indignant flow of invective. She was almost terrible in her anger, as a woman can only be when she is defending some one she loves.

I once saw a woman, meek, cowed, and dispirited with the years of slavery called marriage among these people, divorced from her husband, who beat her. She did not seem to have a soul above her yam-patch, nor

could she be stirred to a show of interest by the announcement of her freedom. Her child, an ill-favoured brat, eruptive with sores, sat by her side, and when she heard that it was to be taken from her, even that woman became terrible in her indignation.

Raluve's anger all changed to the most perfect tenderness as she helped her companion to lift Vere, all bruised and stunned, and carry him to his own house. Once there she would not leave him, but sat fanning him far into the day, without thinking of hunger or thirst, until a friendly storekeeper, who had heard of the disturbance, came to see him. No bones were broken. There were some bad bruises, and an unsightly black eye. But as any movement gave him intense pain, he wisely lay still, and slept away the greater part of the day, while Raluve sat fanning him. Late in the afternoon a burly form filled the doorway. Mr Commissioner Austin was, sorely against his will, come to do his duty. He began by suggesting that Raluve should withdraw, but she would not go farther than the end of the house. Was Vere much hurt? No. Well, he was glad to hear it. He was awfully sorry about the whole business. These wretched connections always ended alike, because they brought

Europeans down to the level of natives. But it would be a lesson to Vere, who would take what he had to say in good part. But Vere did not take it in good part at all, and told him so. He had some news, however. The vessel in which Vere was to leave for headquarters was to sail in a day or two, and Nambuto had been ordered to go before the end of the week.

Left to himself, Vere had ample time to consider his position. This girl loved him,—there was no doubt in his mind about that. What did he feel for her in return—gratitude, the vanity kindled by unsought love, or something stronger than either? And if he could drop back into the life she lived, the life man was intended to live, free from all the vulgar struggle and squalor of civilisation, in some island to the eastward, far from his own kind, where the smell of the reef and the warm wind would possess his senses, he would surely ask for nothing more. But there was a reverse to the picture. If it were to mean the life that some white men, who had abjured civilisation, lived, despised alike by their fellows and the people they consorted with, he could see nothing but misery before them both. He tried to remember a single case where the marriage of a white man to a native woman had

turned out happily. There was Bonson, an educated man like himself. One could read the man's history in his face. All self-respect was crushed out of him now, but how he must have suffered for his mistake when it was too late! No; a curse seemed to follow the union of opposite races: they must put this folly out of their hearts, and each follow the destiny to which they were born. But as he turned to speak to Raluve he met her eyes fixed upon his face. She had crept up to his bed as he lay with his face to the wall.

"What is in your mind, Kalokalo, my star? I cannot bear your face to be hidden from me, for then evil thoughts enter your mind, and your face is changed towards me. Are you in pain?" she asked, laying her hand gently on his forehead.

"Raluve," he said, taking her hand, "I was wondering how I shall fare without you."

"But you are not going to leave me?" she said, catching her breath. "If you go, I must go with you to take care of you."

"We do not plan our lives," he answered; "it is ordered that I go from here in three days."

Her hand dropped from his, and she sat quite still. He could hear her breathing, but cowardice kept him

from looking at her. The light waned and the house became dark, but still she made no sign. At last he could bear the silence no longer.

"Speak, Raluve," he said; "is it not better for us both that I should go?"

"For you it is better," she answered in a low voice, "and therefore it must be. But for me the darkness has fallen, and is eating me up."

What could he say more? The pain had to be borne, and he would only make it worse by speaking. Then as he made no reply, she got up and left the house without another word.

Vere's bruises did not trouble him long. In two days he was busied about his packing, and on the morning the steamer was expected he was ready for the voyage. He had not seen Raluve since he had told her of his determination, and he had felt his courage too weak to risk another interview like the last. But he could not leave her without saying good-bye, and he had just made up his mind to find her when she herself came in. She had brought a beautiful mat as a parting gift. Disregarding all native ceremonial, she laid it down at his feet, saying, "This is to be your sleeping-mat, and it will be my shadow

with you, so that you may not forget me." When he had thanked her, she put out her hand abruptly, saying, "You are going: let us take leave of one another here."

Vere had only to take the hand and let her go, but he had pictured to himself quite another sort of leave-taking, and his vanity was wounded.

"Are we to part as if we were at enmity, Raluve? Every one shakes hands, therefore we must kiss each other: besides, I want to know what you will do when I am gone."

The girl looked at him angrily. "It is nothing to you where I go when you are gone. You are a white man, and I am a black woman. I amused you, my chief, while you were here, and you will find another to amuse you in the place to which you go."

"Raluve, are you angry with me?"

"No. You are a white man, and white men always treat my people so."

"But think——"

"Give me no more reasons. It is enough that I myself would not make you despised of your own people. It is best that you should go."

"But what will you do?"



"I also will go away. The steamer will carry you far, but my canoe shall bear me farther still," and she laughed a hard little laugh. Then she got up to go, and Vere dared not detain her. She did not respond to his parting kiss, but left the house with averted face. What could she have meant by her last words? He remembered with sickening dread that he had heard of natives killing themselves for the most trivial reasons. Men and women had climbed cocoa-nut-trees and flung themselves down because their townsfolk ridiculed them, and Raluve, refined as she was, had a native's feelings underneath the surface. If she meant this, the rest of his life would not be pleasant to him. And as he sat pondering a sound caught his ear, and he ran to the door. There sat Raluve trying in vain to stifle her passionate sobs. He tried to raise her, and draw her back into the house, but she resisted, crying, "O Kalokalo, I cannot leave you in anger, therefore kiss me, and let me go; my love for you is hurting me."

She returned his kiss this time, and in a moment she had passed behind the palm-stems.

Two hours later Vere was shaking hands with his native friends on the beach, hardly daring to look along the line of faces for fear that Raluve might be among

them. But she was not. He strained his eyes from the steamer as she moved slowly out to distinguish the tall lithe figure he knew so well. On the hill above the village was a great boulder of black limestone, hurled from the topmost pinnacle of the island in some old earthquake. As they steamed away he saw a movement on the top of the rock. With his glasses he made out the figure of a woman dressed in white, as Raluve had been that morning. She took off her upper garment, waved it once above her head, and then flung it far out towards the steamer. The wind caught and bore it sideways, but before it had fluttered down among the tops of the palms the figure was gone. It was Raluve's farewell.

Vere had plenty of leisure during the two days' voyage to think over the past. Till now he had been buoyed up by the sense of doing that which was difficult and disagreeable, and therefore probably right, — for his early training had imbued him with the idea that the pleasant ways of life lead into the "broad road"; but now he began to feel unaccountably ashamed of himself. If he had been to blame for accepting the girl's love, still, he thought complacently, the wrench had been as great for him as

for her. But argue as he would, he felt that he was running away from a situation he did not dare to face,—that he was betraying and deserting a woman. What was it that she had said? “The steamer will carry you far, but my canoe shall bear me farther still.” Why, if she had that sort of temptation in her present state of nervous excitement, she would yield, of course. What might she not be doing at this very moment while the engines trampled on and put mile after mile between them? And he might save her if he were there. Pulses began to beat in his brain, and he got up and raced along the empty deck. Only a blue wavy line on the eastern horizon remained of the island. As he looked at it, trying to picture the village that lay beneath it, the memories of the last three weeks rushed over him, with Raluve as the centre of each picture,—her tenderness, her soft words, even the proud little pose of the head that he had so often teased her about. It was a very perfect life while it lasted. Then he began to remember words that he had said but forgotten till now,—words that she must have taken as promises. Nay, but they were promises, and he, an English gentleman, bound by prom-

ises, was coolly breaking them. With every throb of the propeller this feeling became stronger, until he had persuaded himself that he was already bound by the past, and was no longer master of his own actions. There was a feeling of rest in having come to a determination, and his mind recoiled from the idea of again reviewing the arguments that had led to it step by step.

The first action on landing was to write the best and most foolish letter he had ever written, resigning his appointment, without offering any explanation. Then he made terms with the skipper of a cutter that sailed the same afternoon to carry him back. He went on board at once, not daring to meet any one he knew lest awkward questions might be asked.

They had a head-wind all the way back, and Vere became ill with anxiety and excitement during the four days' voyage. At last the palm-groves he had left a week ago were in sight, and he was straining his eyes in trying to recognise Raluve's figure among the crowd on the beach. She was not there. He landed with a sense of sickening fear. Two or three natives shook hands with him, but he dared not ask them the question he longed to have answered. A

couple of storekeepers' assistants were the only white men on the beach. They stared at him in open astonishment, and then explained his return in their own way with many grins and nudges of the elbow. He hurried to his landlord's house, knowing that he would tell him the unvarnished truth without gloating over the scandal. The daughter of the house was alone in the house mending a net. Without waiting to account for his sudden appearance, he said, "Where is Raluve?" The girl knew the story, and hesitated. "Tell me," he cried, angrily, "Am I a sick man that you fear to say the truth? Where is she?"

"She has gone," answered the girl.

"Gone whither?"

"With Nambuto," she said, falteringly.

"Say on."

The story was short. On the day he had left there had been a great meeting, and Raluve had been admonished before all the chiefs. Nambuto had spoken kindly to her, and day after day they had waited till she should make up her mind. Then gradually the old feeling of her race must have gained upon her, and the memory of the dream that had

passed waxed fainter. Her people would take her back, and her lover had deserted her, and as for death by her own hand—it was most terrible.

“But why do you say she has gone with Nambuto?” asked Vere, fiercely. “They are not married? Speak plainly all that you know.”

“They are not yet married, but this I know, that they sailed in Nambuto’s canoe this morning, and before they sailed Raluve’s *tombe*<sup>1</sup> was cut off.”

<sup>1</sup> The *tombe* is a long lock of hair worn by Fijian girls until they marry, as a sign of maidenhood, the rest of the hair being short.

## THE RAIN-MAKERS.

IN Ambrym there is foolishness upon the coast, and wisdom among the hills. For two whole months there had been peace: the clubs lay idle in the caves; the digging-stick replaced the spear; bold warriors ingloriously tilled the soil; and yet there was scarcity. Peace, and yet famine! December had come, but the yam-vines, already twining on the sticks, had sickened and withered; the taro swamp was hard and fissured, like old Turo's face, and a stalk or two, blackened as by fire, was all that was left of the taro; the plantain-leaves were yellow and wrinkled; and still the earth was as iron and the heaven was as brass. Not even Turo remembered such a season.

It was useless to wait longer for rain: a few weeks longer and there would be no one left to wait. Something must be done, and done at once. But what?

The ancient arts were forgotten. What is the use of being able to creep unheard upon an unsuspecting foe, if one has forgotten how to control the unseen powers? What profits it that one can strike one's foe with the club, if one no longer knows how to slay him with magic leaves as the hillmen do? For there is foolishness upon the coast, and wisdom dwells only among the hills.

But to go to the hills for wisdom can only be resorted to under the direst necessity. It is true that brains have often been brought from the hills, but that was in a material form, for purposes of decoration, as the grinning row of skulls under the eaves, that form Turo's patent of nobility, bear witness; and as the end one, added only eight weeks ago, has not yet been paid for in the usual way, there is a natural delicacy in applying for the loan of the wisdom seated in the crania of the survivors. If only the hillmen's heads, when sundered from their wretched carcases, were not useless for purposes of consultation, the difficulty would be solved.

But any death is better than starvation. An ambassador must be sent. If he does not come back, he will be no worse off than if he starved at home, save that



his body will play an important *rôle* at a mountain feast, and his head will grin derisively at the mountain children playing before the chief's house. But even so the hillmen will be one head to the bad, and what is the use of a big score if there be no one left to glory in it? In a week the warriors will be so famine-weakened that the hillmen could hold them by the hair while the boys beat them to death, as Turo used to do when he was younger. Yes, some one must go, and who better than Erirala the orator?

The matter is put before Erirala at the evening conclave. Erirala approves of the principle, but thinks that Malata would make a better envoy, seeing that his brother married a hillman's third cousin. Malata is diffident about his powers of persuasion, and the point is submitted to old Turo as he squats in his doorway, still trying with palsied hands to carve the club he began two years ago.

"Let Erirala go," he pipes, and there is nothing more to be said.

That night the limestone ring, the handiwork of the gods, is unburied from its hiding-place. It is beyond all price but that of rain. Ten barbed spears—not the shin-bone ones, because to present *them* to the

relations of the shin-bones would be indelicate, but good spears, inlaid with mother-of-pearl—and eight strings of shell money, are the price with which the precious rain is to be bought. Erirala leaves at daybreak, after being wept over by his three wives and the sister-in-law who digs his plantation. There is nothing to do but to wait till he either comes back or—till bad news comes. The pitiless sun rides through the burning sky, and sinks at last behind the western hills, leaving the air hazy and tremulous. The tide goes out, and the mud hardens and cracks behind it as it goes. The very crickets are silent—dead, probably, of thirst—and the people still sit, spear in hand, beneath the palm-trees waiting. It grows dark, and still he fails to come. Surely the worst has happened.

A cry at last from the forest. A hundred voices answer, a hundred wasted bodies spring up to welcome Erirala returned from the dead. The silent village has found its voice at last, and every inhabitant, down to the dingo dogs, has something to say, and says it at the top of his voice. Brands are snatched from the fire, and then Erirala is seen standing on the bush-path imploring silence in dumb show.

At last he gets it, and tells his news. The wise have taken pity and come to the foolish; but unless the foolish keep silence, the wise will be frightened and take to their heels, if they have not already done so. The wise know that better men than they have been enticed by fair words and gifts, and fallen into an ambush from which not even their gods could save them, and never came back to tell their friends how it happened.

There is silence, and Erirala retires into the bush and calls. No answer. He shouts again with long-drawn mountain vowels. From far up the hillside comes a faint answer. The wise have run fast and far, and must be reassured, and Erirala bawls comforting words into the darkness. In twenty minutes the two wary old birds emerge into the village square, and stand blinking in the circle of flickering light cast by the fire. The children crowd wonderingly round them, and their elders scan them from the dense shadow of the huts. Will the wise stay the night? No; the wise have a particular engagement at home before morning. Won't they at least wait till a meal can be cooked? No; the wise have come on business, and that done, they must needs return.

Well, then, since they won't, let Erirala go with them to fetch rain.

The chief magician leads the way to the river, now nearly dry. He is elderly and wizened, with no clothes but a shell and a stick thrust through the cartilage of his nose. His familiar is a trifle younger, attired in the same cool garb, but dignified with an ear-lobe pierced and distended enough to carry an empty *caviare* tin whole. The left lobe, following a natural law, had broken under the strain, and after dangling for months on the shoulder, has lately been excoriated and tastefully spliced with grass bandages. The familiar carries a roll of bark-cloth under his arm. Equipped with this only and wisdom, the magicians would force the heavens to give rain. How wonderful is human intellect, and how high above the beasts is man!

Arrived on the river-bank, Erirala is commanded to advance no farther, for it is not permitted the common mortal to witness the mysteries of the intercourse between the gods and their chosen ones. Together they pick their way among the round boulders that form the dry river-bed, till they come to the inch-deep stream that is all that is left of the river. Together they grope to a certain boulder, with a flat top, whose base is

washed by the trickling stream. "This is the place," says the magician. The familiar grasps it, strains at it, and raises one end a few inches from the water. The wise one snatches the cloth from under the familiar's arm and thrusts it under the stone, which falls on it with a heavy thud. Then in the pitchy darkness, with no sound but the faint gurgle of the shallow stream, he chants magic words in a quavering treble—words whose meaning is hidden from degenerate man, but which were handed down by the wise men of old, in the days when gods came up from the sea with white faces, strange head-gear, and turtles' shells on their backs, and slew their forefathers, and sailed away in a magic canoe to the heavens whence they came. Whatever the words meant, the gods always obeyed them, provided that the right kind of cloth had been put under the right kind of stone. Would they disobey now?

When they came back Erirala was sitting on the bank, slapping his bare limbs to kill the mosquitoes and keep his spirits up. "Erirala, there will be rain," said the sage; and without another word he plunged with his companion into the bush, and was gone. The envoy returned to the village. In answer to his anxious questioners, he could only say that he had seen

nothing and knew nothing, except that the rain was coming.

Next morning the brazen sun climbed into a copper sky. Not a breath of air rippled the oily sea; even the distant reef was silent. It was just such a morning as the rest, and the rain-god laughed at spells. Nevertheless, the women were sent to cut firewood to store in the huts, and to gather a store of bush-nuts against the time when the bush would be impassable. The canoes at the river-mouth were hauled up lest the flood should carry them away, and old Turo sat on the beach looking eastwards, and chuckling to himself.

But at noon the day is not like other days. The cockatoos are screaming, which they never do at noon on other days. Insect life is awake. The whole bush is singing, and only dull-witted man awaits a clearer sign. And now even that is given. A purple haze has gathered in the south-west. It resolves into a cloud no bigger than a man's hand; there is a muttering in the heavens, the clouds rush up the sky, though not a breath as yet cools the simmering air or stirs the palm-leaves. The muttering grows to a murmur, the murmur to a distant roar. The air becomes dark; the roar gathers volume. There! there! to the south a great

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grey pillar rolls towards us, lashing the forest beneath it: the air grows cold. To your huts! it is upon us! and with a savage roar the rain-storm bursts. It does not break up into paltry drops, but gushes down upon the thirsty earth in one broad torrent, and the parched soil drinks it greedily, and sends up a sweet fresh smell in gratitude. Did the windows of heaven open so wide as this when Noah launched his clumsy craft upon the waters? Surely the ocean will overflow and engulf Ambrym.

Rain, rain, rain! The sodden thatch has long since ceased to turn the flood. The water beats down the tree-tops, bowing beneath its weight. A raging torrent has been formed through the village square. The soil is crumbling away to the house-foundations, and fast pouring out seawards. There are six inches of water in every house. The crazy rafters of Turo's house have given way, and the last trophy has fallen and been whirled out to sea, grinning at its enemies' new misfortunes. Voices are drowned in the never-ceasing roar of rushing water. It grows dark and light again, and again dark, and the people, hearing, seeing, and breathing nothing but water, cling helpless and dismayed to their house-posts, and wish for the day.

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The third morning dawns, and the men gather round the wreck of Turo's house. Their voices are drowned by the rain and the river, whose trickling stream has long burst its banks and become a furious torrent. They shout to one another that the rain must be stopped. But who can stop it but the rain-makers? Erirala must again go to the wise with greater presents than those that brought the rain. The treasures of the village are collected, and Erirala, half drowned, is laden for his second embassy. Knee-deep in the swift muddy stream that has torn its way through the village, he toils step by step up what was once the path, and disappears. It is night when he reaches the rocky spur on which are perched the dwellings of the wise. He gropes his way to a hut, and shouts greetings through the blinding rain. A voice from within replies. The leaf door slides to one side, and a skinny arm is thrust out for the presents, yet is the envoy not invited in. He proffers his request. The foolish have had the rain. It was good. But there was a little too much of it. Will the wise be of a good mind and turn it off? The wise will do their best: and with this slender comfort Erirala is left to find his way back in the dark, half swimming and half sliding down the slippery path.



But with the dawn the rain has not ceased—nay, it has gathered double volume. What do these crafty hillmen mean? Will they kill us with water since they failed with drought? Or are they too lazy to raise a finger to save us?

Another night passes, and with the morning comes stern resolve. There is no doubt now what are the hillmen's motives, and if we needs must die of water, let us at least redden it with our enemies' blood. There shall be one last embassy to them, and they shall understand that the coast warriors will be trifled with no more. An ultimatum shall be sent to these crafty foes, and the rain shall either cease or be dyed with the blood of the rain-makers. Angry and defiant words are spoken at the meeting on the spur overlooking the village whither the foolish have removed from their inundated dwellings. Hungry and cold, they cower in the driving rain, without any shelter but the dripping trees,—men, women, and crying children huddled together, the victims of a cruel conspiracy between the malignant spirits and their mountain foes. Wearily Erirala leaves them, bound upon his last embassy, without presents this time, but with a stern message instead.

Hour after hour passes, and it is near nightfall when they hear his cry from the forest above them on the hillside. The men seize their weapons, and spring forward to meet him. "I told them that there would be evil unless the rain stopped to-night," he answers; "and they said, 'Draw out the cloth from under the stone and the rain will cease: it is a flat-topped stone.'"

What stone? Why, the river-bed, of course. Not a man is left to guard the women and children, for the whole of the warriors follow Erirala towards the river-bank. The roar gets louder as they rush on. It is the river—a broad foaming cataract by this time. What hope of finding the stone in such a hell of waters as this? But Erirala knows the place. A party is told off to cut stout vines from the forest, and in ten minutes a rope, to which a ship might swing, is made and fastened to a tree in the bend of the river, round which the flood-water swirls and eddies. Clinging to the other end, Erirala and the boy Narau are paid out into the stream, and as the current strikes their bodies they are whirled from side to side like a pendulum girt with a belt of foam, and followed by a foamy wake, like the track of a fast steamer. Near the middle of

the stream there is a deep eddy. As Erirala reaches this he stretches up his arm, and perhaps shouts, though no sound is heard by those on shore. Both he and his companion disappear for a moment, come up for breath, dive again, and then emerge, waving their arms. The people on shore strain at the vine-rope. It does not yield an inch. Now, all together—pull! The rope stretches, yields an inch, another, and suddenly gives some six feet with a jerk. Narau disappears for a moment, and is then seen whirling downstream on the swift current, waving a dripping, sodden, greyish-looking rag. Poor Erirala is forgotten as the whole party rush for the point for which Narau is swimming. A dozen hands are stretched out to pull him ashore. Erirala, leaving the rope tied to the flat-topped stone, strikes out, and in a moment lands at the same place. Yes. Narau has the cloth, sodden though it be to a pulp of bark-fibre, scarce adhering together.

Surely already the rain is abating! Yes; there is no doubt of it! Why, there to the north-west, it is lighter! There is a break in the clouds. One can almost see where the sun is setting. It is little more than a drizzle now—not even that, for we are under the

dripping trees. Two hours later one can see the stars, and the clouds are sweeping away in heavy masses to the southward.

But just think what would have happened if Erirala had not found the cloth under the flat-topped stone!

## MAKERETA.

**M**AKERETA was not beautiful. Her mouth was wide, even for a Fijian girl; and although she was on the shady side of nineteen, she had not yet adopted the staid demeanour suited to her decaying youth. She was a born coquette, and being quick-witted, and with a character hitherto irreproachable, she had captivated the hearts of all the middle-aged widowers in her neighbourhood. Why, had it not even been reported that she had refused the honourable offer of Jenkins, the white trader, and sent away the haughty Buli Yasawa, broken in heart and purse, after gracefully accepting from him five pounds' worth of printed calico and cheap scent! Yes; Makereta had a certain charm about her quite apart from her skill in ironing and the use of the sewing-machine, or her being the niece of Roko Tui Ba. She was

amusing to chaff; her repartees were witty, if not refined; and she had an inexhaustible fund of gossip about all the ladies of her acquaintance. But what a voice she had! Its gentlest tones struck the drum of the ear like a tap with the teeth of a saw; and when she laughed, which was generally after some remark of her own, the old women in the next village would grumble to each other about "that woman's" deficiency in chief-like behaviour. It was Makereta's laugh that brought her into trouble.

Her sister had been for some years married to a steady old native preacher, who was chaplain to the small native force stationed in the mountains. This good lady was the very antipodes of the dusky Makereta. She had never been known to flirt, but then that may have been due to other causes than disposition, and she led her good-natured husband a life of it by making him ferret out real or fancied scandals, very much against his will.

In an evil hour Makereta and three other maidens, having caught a miraculous haul of crabs in Nandi Bay, shouldered their baskets with the double intention of presenting them to her sister and flirting with the gay and licentious soldiery. They climbed the



MAKERETA.





mountain-barrier, and in due time reached the camp. For the next few days I heard nothing of Makereta except her laugh, which triumphed over the half-mile of bush that lay between us. She was staying with her sister, and on some excuse or other the men found it necessary to consult their spiritual adviser several times daily. It was at these times that the higher tones of the laugh floated on the breeze like the cry of some animal in pain.

At length, as the novelist of the marvellous would say, "a strange thing happened." An excited and dishevelled minister of religion came panting into my house, and this is what he said:—

"Sir, a terrible thing! Litiana and Makereta have been angry, and Litiana is much hurt. This was the way of it. Makereta was in the cook-house with some of the soldiers; they were joking, and Makereta laughed very loud. Then Litiana called to her, saying, 'We are ashamed before the chiefs to-day;' and Makereta replied with a very bad word, and Litiana went in to chastise her, and they fought, and Makereta bit Litiana, and her ear is gone, and——"

"And what?" I asked, as he hesitated.

"And, sir," he said, solemnly, "*we cannot find the ear.*"

I went with him. It was too true. Litiana was sobbing in a corner, trying to stanch the blood from the site of her ear, and Makereta was panting between two restraining soldiers. Two others were carefully turning over the mats on what had been the battle-field. We searched everywhere but without success, and then I turned to Makereta.

"Where is your sister's ear?" I asked.

She half smiled, and said she did not know.

"Do you remember biting her?"

"Yes."

"Did you bite her ear off?"

"I think it came off."

"Did you *swallow* it?"

"*Iss?*" (who knows?)

A further ineffectual search left no doubt as to what had become of the ear. Litiana, smarting under her injuries, haled her sister before the native court, presided over by that magistrate who, in happier days, used to beguile the tedium of the bench with music on the Jew's-harp. The damages were assessed at five shillings, and the little rift made the music between the sisters dumb.

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"Was my ear only worth five shillings?" complained the elder.

"Is it sisterly to drag one's sister to court like an Indian coolie-woman?" asked Makereta.

I don't know whether they have ever met since. Makereta soon after this fell in love with a mild-mannered policeman, married him in defiance of her relations, and now rules him with an iron rod somewhere down Nadroga way. They both asked me to help them to bring it about, I being their father, which meant that I was to supply the pigs for the wedding-breakfast.

## ROMEO AND JULIET.

**R**OMELO loved Juliet, there was not the slightest doubt about that; for although Juliet had been tattooed round the mouth, and had already married Tybalt, and had dug Tybalt's yams and cut Tybalt's firewood for the last two years, yet was Romeo ready to die for her. Verona slept peacefully in the bosom of a tiny green valley, shut in by great jagged mountains, and soothed by the lazy music of a tiny river whose water must travel many days before it mixed with the great salt ocean. The hot air quivered in the burning sun, which no breeze ever came to cool, and at night not even a mosquito broke the utter silence. No street brawls here in this Verona of Southern seas, for the humpbacked pig and half-clothed chicken were past getting up a brawl, and they were the only occupants of Verona's single street. Old Capulet could tell you

of brawls enough, in which club took the place of rapier, and the bodies of the slain were disposed of in a peculiar way; but that was before the white man and the measles arrived, when Mongondro still made the earth tremble, and before these white lunatics came and made him wrap calico round his loins, and practise incantations with a hymn-book (which were a waste of time, because nobody died of them as they do of the real incantations), and taught him, in outlandish Bauan, that when he was dead he would be made alive again to be burnt, and asked him to give a shilling every now and again to the Great Spirit not to burn him, and then took the shilling away with them. But old Capulet doesn't talk about these things any more, because last year the teacher overheard him telling stories to the young men, and threatened to burn him up with a flash of lightning if he ever did it again.

Decidedly Verona was not an exciting place to live in; and so long as the yam-crop was good, and the missionary left them alone, and that other white man who came sometimes on a horse, and told them to hoe their roads, life was easy and monotonous.

Old Capulet had never heard of a romance. There wasn't a word for it in his vocabulary, and so he, at any

rate, may be excused for what he did when Tybalt came and told him what had happened. Why, in Capulet's day, women were not worth more than a whale's tooth, however well they could dig! and as for a girl refusing to marry the man who had paid for her, or being untrue to the man she married—why, the thing was unheard of; or at least, if it ever had happened, the case had always been dealt with in the same way—the club, with sometimes the oven to follow.

So when Tybalt came that evening with the story about Romeo and Juliet his wife—Romeo, a man of the hated Noikoro clan,—it was not surprising that old Capulet repaired to Tybalt's house with his long walking-staff, and, with Tybalt's active co-operation, gave Juliet a rather severe thrashing. Nor did the old women see any more romance in the affair than did Capulet; and from the day when Tybalt's suspicions became certainties, the course of true love ran very roughly indeed. Did poor Juliet don her newest *liku*, with a fringe nearly ten inches long, to go wood-cutting in the hope of a stolen meeting with her adorer, she was sure to find some old village hag dogging her steps. Did she put on Koroisau's old pinafore to impress Romeo on Sunday with her superior sense of the

decencies, her most sacred feelings were sure to be harrowed in the evening by injurious remarks about her figure, and the folly of old women trying to pass for young girls.

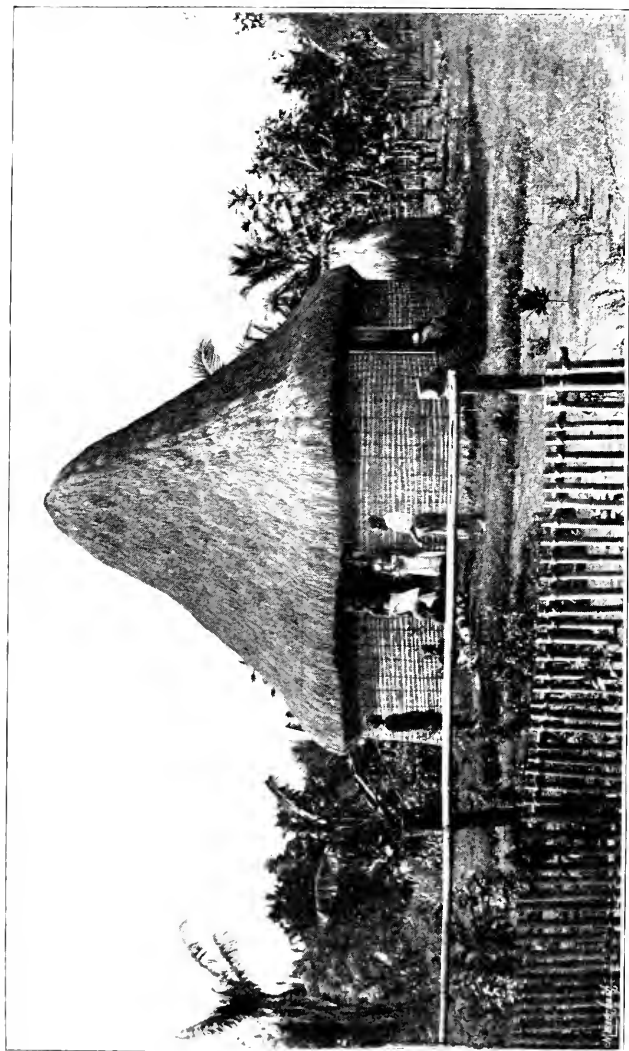
Romeo, poor fellow, fared no better. He was no longer welcome in the village of his adoption. When the yams were boiled he was not even asked to partake of them. Some one trampled his yam-vines in the night, and, last insult of all, Capulet's nephew threw a stone at his pig. He loved Juliet with a great and overwhelming passion. He did not know why. She was not beautiful, though her mouth, it is true, was a triumph of the tattooer's skill; but time had over-ripened her charms, and the lines of her youthful figure were a trifle blurred and indistinct. Yet Romeo was quite sure in his own mind that nobody had ever loved as he did in the world before, and Juliet returned his passion—at least she said she did.

Life was becoming unbearable for both of them. They could not fly together, for whither could they fly? Romeo had once seen the sea from the mountain-pass at Naloto, and he had heard that the water closed in his land all round. He knew well enough that if he fled with her to any village he had heard of, in two

weeks they would be brought back ; and as for the bush, the idea of living there alone was not to be thought of for a moment. There was one refuge. He did not know where it was, but he knew the path that led to it, which many another had trod before him. The white men said it was a very pleasant place if you were a missionary, but a very hot and uncomfortable place if you were only a mountaineer. But Romeo didn't believe that. The spirits of the coast natives jumped from the north-west cliffs into the sea, and the wraiths of the old mountain chiefs lived in the thick forest—at least so the old men said ; but as no one had ever been there and come back, how could any one know ? True, the teacher said that a white man had been there and come back, but then white men eat biscuits and things out of tins, and have other gods, and so they probably go to a different place. For the place Romeo was thinking of, with bitterness gnawing at his savage heart, was Death, and the path that led to it was *Langaingai*.

Romeo knew all about *Langaingai*, for had not Gavindi drunk of it last year and died, and those two Naloto girls, who smoked after drinking it to make it doubly sure, and Janeti, Buli Nandrau's daughter,—only her





FRIAR LAURENCE'S HOUSE.



relations poured cocoa-nut milk down her throat when she had only traversed the path half-way? He knew not who had discovered it, for the old men did not know it. In their day the path was always open to him who would travel it—by an enemy's club. Perhaps some wise woman taught Gavindi, and showed him how to mix orange-bark with it, and smoke away his life when he had drunk.

Now Friar Laurence, though unconnected with the cloth, had in his time performed the last offices to a larger number of people than any other practitioner in the mountains. In his own person he had not unfrequently united the offices of both sexton and grave. But that side of his business was recreation rather than solid work. His real calling might rank as one of the fine arts. Like the painter and the author, his stock-in-trade was small, and easily obtained. The art lay in employing his properties with skill. They consisted in a bamboo, a banana-leaf, a bit of bark, a leaf or two, and a little human hair. Furnished with these simple tools, Friar Laurence would, for the trifling sum of a whale's tooth, or a bolt of bark-cloth, lay low the head on which the hair had grown. So widespread was the Friar's reputation that, when the mad white men had

come and forbidden the noble art of war, he had found it convenient to reside for some months in an inaccessible mountain-cave, and had returned to Verona with his occupation gone, and a head crammed with the wisdom born of solitary meditation.

To Friar Laurence then did Romeo repair one dark still night. The wise man sat on a log at his threshold airing his shrunken legs. He eyed Romeo's whale's tooth with bleared and watery eyes, and asked enigmatically what tree he wanted felled. When he understood the situation he seemed disappointed, and only told Romeo to return the following night with a white man's bottle full of the stuff they call kerosene. This entailed a journey of thirty miles the following day to fetch the precious liquid from the nearest store; but Romeo was ready to do more than this, and at sunset the Friar received the bottle, a square black one. He emptied into a cocoa-nut shell all the oil except a wine-glassful, and filled up the bottle with an opaque muddy-looking fluid.

That night beneath the *tavola*-tree, where they had their tryst, did Romeo tell Juliet that the moment for carrying out their sorrowful plan had come. She had just been telling him that her misery was so great that

she could not bear to live longer. But when Romeo showed her in the dim light the ominous gin-bottle, two huge cigarettes, and a box of matches, and further whispered the dread name *Langaingai*, life seemed suddenly to have become less unbearable than before. But Romeo was terribly in earnest, and she, half consenting, followed him. Silently they trod the narrow path that led to Romeo's yam-patch. A babbling stream bordered it, and on the bank beneath a huge banyan-tree they sat down side by side. Juliet was weeping, but Romeo, with set face, stared at the bottle tight clenched in his hand. Sadly he lighted one of the cigarettes, and, handing it to Juliet, said, "You shall drink first, and when you are dead I will drink too, and follow you. You must smoke this as soon as you have drunk down to there," and he indicated the place half-way down the bottle with his thumb-nail.

Juliet's blood ran cold. With a little shiver she pushed the bottle away, saying, "Be of a good mind, Aisala, and drink first, for you are the stronger; and when you are dead it will be easy for me to die after you."

But Romeo saw that she was dissembling, and that

black fear filled her heart. He gloomily drew the cork, and put the neck of the bottle to his nose. It smelt horrible, for the kerosene was floating on the top. He turned fiercely upon Juliet.

“Are you going to fool me?” he cried. “Know now that you shall drink first, that we may die together.”

He seized her roughly by the wrist and tried to force the foul-smelling bottle between her lips. Life had never seemed so sweet to Juliet as at that moment. If Romeo chose to die—well, that was his affair; but as for her—she preferred life. She struggled and screamed, and with a bitter cry Romeo released her, and putting the bottle to his own lips drank greedily. Seeing this, and beside herself with fear, Juliet fled shrieking down the path to Verona, and roused the whole village with her cries.

“In his yam-patch,” she cried—“he is dead! He has drunk *Langaingai*.”

All Verona was soon beneath the banyan-tree—all Verona except Friar Laurence, who was accustomed to this kind of thing. There lay Romeo unconscious, his head pillowed on an empty gin-bottle, with a half-smoked *suluka* between his nerveless fingers. Gently they lifted him, and bore him to Capulet’s house, and

lit torches, and drove out the women, and brought young cocoa-nuts, and prised open Romeo's jaws with a digging-stick, and forced the milk down his throat; and all the while the teacher sat by in a clean white shirt, bursting to question the reviving Romeo about the details of his love affair, to draw a moral therefrom for his next Sunday's sermon.

At last Romeo, half drowned in cocoa-nut milk, spluttered, coughed, and opened his eyes. He thought perhaps for a moment that he was in another world; but this was no time for vain regrets, for the teacher had them in his grip, and was cross-examining the frightened Juliet as to how many months their *liaison* had continued. Meanwhile the village officer arrived with a rusty pair of handcuffs, and before daylight Romeo, but half recovered from his journey to "that bourne," found himself embarked on that rougher journey over the rocky path that leads to the Tuatuacoko court-house.

Why could not the story have ended here, with the romance all unspoil, with the old story of love till death, and faithless timorous beauty? But I must tell the story to the end as it really happened, and not as I would fain tell it.

The Commissioner's court sat, the assessors were sworn, the charge was attempted suicide, the chief witness for the prosecution was Juliet, and poor Romeo was in the dock. He was quite the ugliest man I have ever seen—deeply pitted with smallpox, and with a mouth which, seen full face, might have extended completely round his head for all one could see to the contrary. The defence was ingenious. Romeo pleaded that the people of Verona had treated him so badly that they deserved a fright and a warning, and the alleged poison was nothing more noxious than a decoction of orange-bark mixed in an old kerosene-bottle; that he had drunk this off and shammed being dead until he saw the joke had gone far enough, and that then he came to life again. The empty gin-bottle was brought, the dregs poured into a saucer, and a policeman was sent into the bush to bring some real *Langaingai*. It was a slender, small-leaved plant, about eighteen inches in height, with a fibrous woody bark. The bark was scraped in court, and kneaded up with a little water, and strained. The result was a muddy-looking yellow fluid. The alleged poison smelt abominably of kerosene; but the liquids had to be compared somehow, and the assessors, one English and



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one native, volunteered to furnish the vile body. The court also tried half a teaspoonful of each. After imbibing the kerosene, one became conscious of an acrid biting flavour, unlike any known taste. There was no doubt that the liquids were identical. Of the after effects, I need only say that the court adjourned, and no more evidence was taken that day, both court and assessors spending their time in drinking cocoa-nut milk, and trying to resume control over their interior mechanism. When they did recover, Romeo was convicted.

## THE WOMAN FINAU.

“THE woman knows no shame, she defies the law, she despises your orders, and she says she will never leave the white man.”

“Then let them marry.”

“I told her that, and she said it was not the foreigner’s wish to marry her. But you are the Governor. It is for you to punish evil-doers. All Vavau is ashamed because of this woman.”

“Arrest her, then, and bring her here.”

At sunset the chiefs had met at the ruinous wooden villa that is the Government House. In the central hall, once gay with paint and gilding, they sat cross-legged before the *kava*-bowl, young Laifone the Governor in the seat of honour. And into this august assembly Ana Finau, the abandoned contemner of public opinion and the law of the land, was led trem-

bling, the only woman in the room. The men stopped talking and looked at her with hard unsympathetic faces. What pity should they have for a country-woman of theirs who could stoop to one of these vile foreigners, and leave her own kind for the society of a trader—a white man?

The policeman who brought her told her roughly to sit down before the Governor, who glanced at her and bade his companion continue the story the girl's entrance had interrupted. The chiefs who had come from a distance asked their neighbours who the girl was, and why she had been brought. She meanwhile sat on the floor, her feet doubled under her, as the manner is, her eyes cast down, but with a certain dogged air of resistance about her, as if she was prepared for the worst.

The story was finished. From Laifone's hearty laugh it might be guessed that it was not over-refined, and the policeman called his attention to Ana Finau. It was no time for business, for the *kava* was nearly pounded, the two kerosene-lamps were lighted, and Laifone was bored with the cares of office. He held up his hand, and the ringing thud of the pounding *kava*-stones ceased.

"Ana," he said, "they say you are living with the white man. You were punished and told to leave him, and you have gone back."

The girl reached for a straw on the dirty floor, and began to dissect it with her fingers, examining it intently.

"Why don't you answer?" asked the policeman, roughly. She glanced up for a moment, and resumed her dissection of the straw.

"It is true," she said.

"Why do you not marry him?"

"That is Falani's affair. I suppose he is not willing that we should marry."

"Then you must leave him at once," said Laifone, with the air of having dismissed the subject, and turned to the story-teller with a question.

The girl did not move. She had pulled her straw to pieces, and now deliberately reached for another. She looked comely in the lamplight which touched the clear red skin, threw deep shadows into the eyes, and glinted through her glistening auburn curls. The *kava*-stones rang out again, and conversation became general. The policeman touched her arm. She shook him off impatiently, threw her head back, and looking

Laifone full in the face, said, "I shall not leave Falani."

There was a dead silence. The *kava*-pounder paused with stone uplifted. Laifone stared at her, half amused and half angry.

"You must leave him, or be punished," he said, and muttered something about a beautiful girl wasted.

But the policeman was scandalised and indignant. "You impudent woman," he cried, "you have insulted the Governor and the chiefs. You have no shame, and you are impudent." Then turning to Laifone he cried, "Is Vavau to become heathen because of this evil-minded woman? It has become a by-word. Religion is despised because of her. We look to you, Laifone. I pray you leave her to us, the police, to deal with her. We will bring her to obedience."

"Take her away then."

He sprang up, seized her roughly by the arm, lifted her to her feet, dragged her to the door, and, with a sudden jerk, pulled her whimpering out into the darkness. A man at the back of the room followed them out.

"A strong-minded woman," said Laifone. "Pound the *kava*."

The root is pounded, kneaded in the bowl, and

strained. "*Fakatau*," cries the presiding Matabule. Then as the cocoa-nut is filled, the man at the bowl gives the piercing long-drawn cry, "*Kava kuo heka*," and as he ceases, the cry is taken up from the darkness outside—a wail of agony.

"Hark! what is that?" says Laifone. It comes again and ceases in choking sobs—a woman's voice."

A man runs out, and in a moment returns. "It is Ana Finau," he says; "the police are doing something to her."

The wail of agony comes again, mixed with the accents of a man's voice in anger, and a dull sound like a blow.

"Go and tell them to be quieter," says the presiding Matabule; "or stay," he adds, "tell them to take her farther off. Don't they know we are drinking *kava*?"

Franz Kraft is entertaining to-night. It is a fact to be remembered in Vavau when one *copra*-trader spends the evening with another, for competition is strong and the milk of human kindness watery. There, in the mean little room at the back of the store, they sit at the only table, which is furnished with glasses, a cracked jug, and the inevitable square black bottle. Round the room are ranged a number of half-emptied

cases of cheap German prints and cutlery, whose contents are piled about, to be within reach if any of the shelves in the store should need replenishing. Franz Kraft, in a dirty flannel shirt and trousers, unkempt, perspiring, and bibulous, is not a fascinating-looking person, but he is prosperous and refined as compared with his companion. They have reached the quarrelsome stage of the evening,—anon they will be vowing eternal friendship,—and Franz is accusing his boon companion of the heinous crime of under-selling him, and emphasising his forcible remarks with heavy blows with his fist upon the table. It is hard to realise that this squalid ruffian, who is content to live on fare that the forecastle of a whaler would reject, is worth ten or twelve thousand pounds, made by his own thrift and hard work.

“You haf for dwenty bounds of kreen *cobra* one shilling given, I say. Finau, she tell me,” he cries, with emphasis born of gin.

The door behind him opens, and a gust of wind extinguishes the kerosene-lamp. Franz swears as he gropes for the matches. But when they are found the lamp-funnel is too hot to hold, and the match goes out. The boon companion slams the door to with his foot,

and in doing so stumbles against a soft body on the floor.

"Who the h—ll is it?" he cries; "some d—d nigger. A woman, by G—d!" he adds, as the body groans in answer to his kick.

Franz having succeeded in lighting the lamp, turns to look at the intruder. A woman lies face downwards on the floor sobbing. The Englishman takes her roughly by the arm, and turns her over.

"By G—d! Kraft, it's Finau, and badly knocked about too! Here, you'd better see to her. I'm off home."

Kraft stooped, lamp in hand, saw the torn *vala* and the poor bruised face, and knew who had done this, and why. But as he raised her, he asked all the same.

"The police," she answered, "because I would not leave you."

Long after she has sobbed herself to sleep Kraft was muttering his opinions of the police and the authorities generally in forcible German. To-morrow he will beard the Governor Laifone, and tell him what he thinks of him. He will take Finau away to Samoa or Fiji, where the moral code is less strict, and she will be left in



peace; for the girl is a good girl, can cook well, can even be trusted to mind the store, will spy on the doings of the neighbouring traders—is, in short, necessary to him. And she is better than Hinz's and Schulze's women, who have children to squall and get in the way. Besides, she will stay with him till he takes his long-projected trip to Hamburg. When that time comes she can go back to her relations, and the police will leave her alone.

But when the morrow came Kraft heard that the Government oranges were to be sold to the highest bidder—a whole season's crop. There is money in it, and it will never do to quarrel with the Governor; and as for going to Fiji or Samoa in the middle of the *copra* season—of course that is out of the question. Finau had told him the details of her trial overnight, and the outrage, and she dared to hint that marriage would shield her for the future; but Kraft was too old a bird to be caught in such a trap as young Elliston was, for the chief object of the coming trip to Hamburg was the carrying out of a long-cherished scheme. He would figure in his native town as a wealthy planter, with vast estates in the Pacific, and dazzle the eyes of some young girl with a *dot*, then settle down as an

altogether respectable character. Of this part of the scheme Finau knew nothing.

Christmas, with its feasting and church-going, with its stifling heat and drowning showers, has come and gone. The oranges have turned to gold on the trees as they were in Hesperus's garden of old, and are falling in thousands among the long grass, because there are not thirsty mouths enough to suck them. The traders have bickered and wrangled all the long season through, till they are scarcely on drinking terms. The monthly steamer is here for her last cargo of oranges. From dawn till sunset carts laden with the golden fruit plough the miry roads, and the tap of the hammer nailing down the fruit-cases is never silent. Once a-month this "sleepy hollow" of the Pacific assumes an air of energy and bustle, and then sinks into coma, exhausted by the effort, as the steamer glides round the point. The fit is upon it now. The whole population is either at work or encouraging the workers,—the girls and children pelting the men with oranges as they sweat under the heavy cases on the wharf. All save one. Up there in Kraft's store, where the laughter and shouts from the wharf are faintly echoed, a woman, half blinded by her tears, is on her knees before an

iron trunk. It is Finau learning the lesson that men teach women,—sometimes when the skin of both is white, generally when one is brown. She only heard last night that Falani was called away to *papalagi*, and that one of those strange necessities that govern the lives of white men forced him to leave her. But who knows? All her friends prophesied that this would happen when she first came to Falani. And there was Maata, who went to William, the white man, because he said he would marry her; and he kept putting it off, and then, when she had had her first child, he went to *papalagi*, saying he would return in a month. That was six years ago. And now Falani was going.

If she had had a white skin, and the man did this to her, she would perhaps have been strengthened by the sense of bitter wrong that he could take her all, let her slave for him, and suffer for him, and then lightly cast her aside without even the grace to take her into his confidence till the last morning; or she would have been cast into the black depths of despair by her utter desolation: but being only a native woman with a brown skin, she felt neither of these, and helped him to pack his trunk.

Kraft himself, returning from the steamer, breaks in

upon her reverie, bustling and eager. She sees the half-concealed delight in his face, and even that does not repel her, being, as I have said, a native with none of the finer feelings.

"Falani," she says solemnly, "tell me truly why you are going. Is it because you are weary of me, or because I have borne you no children?"

"Ah, Finau, do not worry, or say foolish things. You know it is because I cannot help myself, and in six months I shall be back with you, and I shall write to you often. Do not be foolish."

"Falani, you will forget me," she persists, "and marry some white woman, as Mr Leason did. And you swore so often you would never leave me. Only a week ago you swore it."

This being true is too much for his patience.

"You will make me tire of you, Finau, if you talk foolishly, and get angry. I have told you the truth. In six months I shall be back, and then we will be married by the missionary—that is, if you are good, and do not talk foolishly."

This has the desired effect of making Finau cry; and as even a German *copra*-trader has a soft spot in his composition, a sudden impulse of tenderness

and remorse makes the man take her in his arms and try to soothe away her trouble. For the moment he almost realises that this woman has loved him as he never deserved to be loved,—that she has not even shrunk from death itself for his sake, and that in return she only asks him to let her go on serving him ; and for all this he is about to stab her in the back, to lie to her, to desert her. Is it too late ?

So they sit in the steamy air, laden with the hot smell of rotting fruit, while the laughter and shouts float up to them from the wharf, and he, half wavering, caresses her, and whispers comforting promises into her ear.

But the shrill whistle of the steamer pierces the air, drowning all other sounds in its own vulgar yell. The spell is broken. Kraft has paid his passage, and the steamer is going. All the rest is folly, born of an over-tender heart.

“Finau, I must go !” he cries ; “give me the box, and say good-bye, or I shall be late.”

“*Oua leva*” (wait), she says, and running to the box under pretence of rearranging its contents, she strips off her scented neckerchief, and buries it among the clothes. “He shall take my shadow with him,” she

murmurs; and then turning to him, she asks him to throw his handkerchief into the sea when the steamer sails, "to be your shadow with me." She is so earnest about this little superstition that, half laughing, he promises.

The whistle blows again, a hurried kiss, and he goes off, box on shoulder, while she, stifling her sobs, walks wearily to the hill above the harbour and sits down, covering her head with her *vala*.

She sees the mate drive the crowd of natives over the gangway on to the wharf, the hawser cast off, and she sees Falani distinctly leaning over the rail and laughing with the other white men with whom he has just parted. She watches him as the steamer glides down the harbour. Now he will throw his handkerchief, and be bound irrevocably to come back to her. Now, surely, he will throw it. What, not yet? Ah! he is waiting till the vessel nears the point. She stands up in her eagerness. "He must throw it,—he promised!" she cries aloud in her agony. But the vessel is half behind the point now—a moment more and she is out of sight—and he never threw it: so he is gone for ever, and will never return to Finau as long as they both shall live.

Kraft had forgotten his promise until, looking up, he saw and recognised a lonely figure, with arms outstretched, upon the hill; but feeling in his pocket, he found he had only one handkerchief, and it was not worth sacrificing a good handkerchief for a silly native superstition.

Under the first sense of utter loneliness the sneers of her own people were easy enough to bear. *They* did not understand. And then, when she had returned to the old life at Latu's house with her own people, living their life, sharing their interests, the sorrow faded (as sorrow always does fade, thank heaven!), and the past became a little hazy and unreal. It is good to be a child, or to have a brown skin, which is the same thing, for with them time will heal in days wounds that cripple us for years, and leave scars behind them: and so the sun shines again as brightly as before, and the growth is not stunted. Only sometimes at the *gatu*-board Finau's mallet would stop beating, and her eyes would wander away there to the point in the harbour that shuts out the channel, with a wistful far-off look, until the woman next her, indignant at being left to beat for both, would cry out, "The *gatu* [bark-cloth] is hardening while Finau is looking for Falani;"

and during the coarse laugh that followed Finau would beat the yielding bark with ringing blows, changing her mallet from hand to hand as each tired.

So six months passed away. Finau had long given up asking at the post-office for a letter when the steamer came in; and when young Beni, the post-office clerk, threw her one at the *kava*-drinking in Latu's house two days after the steamer had left, she thought for a moment there had been some mistake. Beni, with the privilege appertaining to his office, had as usual opened it and circulated it among his acquaintances for the two days that had intervened since the arrival of the mail; but being in some white man's language, his curiosity was still ungratified. Finau thrust it into the bosom of her *kofu*, and contained her soul in patience until the morning. She was at Müller's door before he was up next morning. After he had promised inviolable secrecy the German letter was produced, read, and translated into dog-Tongan, while Finau sat on the floor with glistening eyes. The joke was altogether too good for Müller to keep to himself, promise or no promise, and before evening all in Vavau who cared to know, whether white or brown, were duly made aware that Franz Kraft could not live



without Finau,—that though his body was in Germany his heart was in Vavau,—and that though the German ladies of high degree all made love to him, yet none was so beautiful as Finau, and he was adamant to them. The whole effusion did great credit to Kraft's wit; and the best of the joke was that Finau swallowed it all, including the paragraph about his tearing himself away from Hamburg because he could not bear the separation any longer, only the chiefs in Hamburg would not let him go for some inscrutable reason of their own. Truly Franz Kraft was a most humorous fellow. The one sentence Müller did not translate was a heading, in execrable Tongan, that she was to get the drunken Wilhelm Kraft, Franz's brother, to read the letter, and on no account to take it to Müller or any one else.

But what cared Finau that the contents of her letter were public? They might laugh as they would—her husband had not forgotten her: he was coming back to marry her, and she would toil for him all her days, and be happy. Next month would come another letter to say he was starting, and in three months more he would be here. Ah, those months would be so easy to live through now! She gravely dictated to the

delighted Müller an answering love-letter. She never ceased to think of him; and she had had no rest since he went; and would the good God guard him, and bring him safely back to her,—a very tame composition beside Kraft's love-letter, but as Müller never sent it, the lack of style was of no consequence.

But the letter that should have come by the next steamer must doubtless have been lost in the post; or perhaps Kraft was starting, and did not think it worth while to write. Another mail, and still no letter. Ah! it is now clear. Poor Falani must be ill. The old letter was getting quite worn out now, from being carried in the bosom and slept on at night, but the writing was still visible through the oil-stains. It certainly did look shaky,—yes, decidedly Falani must be ill.

And then the third steamer came, and Beni said there was no letter. That evening brother Wilhelm paid Latu a visit, three sheets in the wind, as was usual with him at that time of night. He wanted Finau; he was labouring with a message for Finau. She is fetched from the cook-house. The difficulty is to find words for the message to Finau, for the message requires "breaking gently," and it is difficult to break news gently under the influence of gin.

“Finau,” hiccoughs brother Wilhelm, “Falani has written. He told me to tell you—he is married.” The instructions were to break the news gently, and having carried them out to the satisfaction of his own conscience, brother Wilhelm takes himself to where the bottles are square and black, and the night may be profitably spent.

Far from the haunts of men there is a place where none dare to come alone. The land sloping up from Neiafu is broken here in a great precipice, against whose feet the mighty ocean-rollers, unchecked by any reef, break ceaselessly with a dull roar, making the overhanging rocks tremble a thousand feet above them. Landwards Haafulu Hao, with its myriad islets, is spread out like a map; seawards is nothing but the sleepless ocean meeting the blue sky. Thither the dead are brought to sleep in their white graves, untroubled by the living; thither go the poets of the *lakalaka* for inspiration; thither go the girls of Halaufuli for flower-garlands, but not alone, for the spirits of the dead roam among the rocks of Liku, and must be scared away by numbers. Jutting out from the precipice is a single shaft of rock round which, even in calm weather, a furious wind eddies. With a good

head one may climb out to this pinnacle, and, holding on firmly, see nothing between his feet and the foaming surf a thousand feet below.

There was a faint light in the western horizon where the moon had set. The stars were veiled by fleecy clouds—only where Venus hung low in the sky, casting a silver trail over the sea, was the night clear. The strong south-east trade-wind was turning cold, as it does before dawn, and Finau, breathless from her unconscious journey, instinctively wrapped her *vala* round her shoulders. As she ran from the shelter of the roaring palms on to the cliff's edge, the thunder of the surf made the rock on which she stood tremble, and the south wind, wet with spray, drenched her with tiny particles of water. The path ended here: it was only used for the last journey of the dead, who slept all around her in their shrouds of white sand glistening in the dim starlight. The sight of the precipice before her brought reflection to her maddened brain. She was on the Liku where the spirits are, and at night, when the spirits oftenest are abroad. But she felt no fear now, for a sudden thought had taken possession of her. She remembered how, not many months since, Laubasi, the beauty of Neiafu, had disappeared; how

they had searched for her, following the girlish foot-prints in the muddy path; how Palu the fisherman had crept down the cliff-face at Anamatangi, and seen far below him a body lying on a rocky ledge; how at first it was thought that she had been swept down by the furious wind that roars across the cave's mouth in all weathers, boisterous or calm, until the body was brought back, and then the women gave another reason—for Laubasi was a Wesleyan class-leader, much regarded for her character, and in a month or two that would have been gone had she lived. The Anamatangi was scarce half a mile from where Finau stood. With set purpose in her dark face she walked quickly along the narrow path, hedged in by overhanging trees that led along the edge of the cliff. In half a mile she emerged upon a grassy plain sloping down towards Neiafu, whence in the daytime the thousand isles of Haafulu Hao could be seen as in a map. Here she turned seawards, and passed down a stony narrow path among the trees. The path became narrower and steeper, then rose a little, and suddenly Finau found herself standing upon a razor edge of rock, the apex of a buttress jutting many feet beyond the main cliff, whose base had been worn away by the surf of ages.

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It was too dark to see below, but as every long roller crashed into the caves at the cliff's base the pinnacle trembled, and she knelt, grasping the rugged moss with her fingers. Only not to think—not to think of what she had come here to do,—not to think of what lay below her in the darkness,—not to think of what was beyond if she passed the gate! She remembered Paula's sermon when Laubasi's fate was known,—how he described her burning in the flames, as if he had been there to see; but he had said that of so many people, and Falani said it was all an invention of the missionaries to make the people give them money. How white, how still and restful, those graves had seemed, in one of which Laubasi lay; but how the sharp-pointed rocks must have torn her flesh when she fell! It must have been a worse agony than the police inflicted, and that was too much to bear! So she lay face downward on the rocky pinnacle, her courage waning, filled with despair, and with a terror that was worse than despair. The east turned grey, and the morning star was quenched by the growing light which flecked the sea with foaming wave-tops, unseen till now. And with the dawn the wind grew stronger, till it would have been unsafe for Finau to

stand up, even if she would. The face of the cliff, too, behind her became visible, and she saw with terror the dangers of the path she had traversed by the dim light of the stars. One false step and her body would have fallen down there, where ledge upon ledge and pinnacle upon pinnacle of grey limestone-rock are half hidden by ferns and creepers, as the thorns of the *matolu* are hidden by its velvet leaves, and beneath all a white hell of roaring waters.

As the light grew, she saw in the face of the precipice behind her a black hole large enough to admit the body of a man. To reach it one must creep along a ledge, slanting from the place where she lay. This was the cave of the winds, into which only Tubou the fleet-footed had penetrated, and Lolohea, who, tradition said, had fled when Feletoa was taken, and who, after peace was made, still dwelt in the wild Liku, communing with the spirits, and accumulating wisdom. It was on this very spot he stood when King Finau's men brought him to bay till their chief should speak with him; and it was here that he was offered lands, slaves, and the choice of the fairest maidens of Vavau, only to refuse them for the solitude of this awful place. The wind was increasing in force, and it boomed across the

mouth of the cave like a great organ-pipe. In the lulls a hollow roar seemed to come from the very bowels of the island. Somewhere far below the great ocean-rollers poured in, driving the imprisoned air through the mouth with terrific force. Surely no living man could dare the feats of those old heroes of tradition?

No! Death in such a place, and in such a way, were too horrible, and Finau, trembling and weak, looked round for a way of escape. The ridge she had crossed was now vibrating like a tense wire. She tried to rise, clinging to the rotten fern with her hands, and nearly lost her balance in a sharp gust of wind. It was hopeless. So she must die after all! And she lay there, dazed and bewildered, with all other desire gone but that of living.

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“Here is the woman Finau. Her mind is foolish, but I have brought her back alive. Take better care of her, lest we of the Liku be again obliged to save her and carry her these four miles. Next time she goes to the cave of the winds she will fall perhaps where Laubasi did, and then we shall have to bury your dead.”

Finau's uncle is awakened by a pinch on the leg, and goes out sulkily into the darkness with the man to



where his cart stands. The jolting over the stony roads from Halaufuli has wakened Finau from her stupor, and she talks wildly and incoherently as her helpless body is lifted from the cart and laid on the mats near the lamp.

"The police will come to ask questions, for they stopped me as I was coming. I don't want to get into trouble, so I shall go." The cart rumbles away into the night.

It is weary work tending Finau week after week, for there are limits even to the claims of kinship. A relation may be ill and helpless for a week, or even two, and who would complain? But when it passes into months, and the relation has fits of blind anger, and talks foolishly, and is ungrateful, who can be blamed for wishing to get rid of her? Thus reasoned Ana, Finau's aunt by marriage, after the manner of her kind, and not being ashamed of her opinions, she gave them to all Neiafu, including John Mason, the drunken carpenter, a grass-widower three times deep. And when Ana understood that there was a vacancy in the Mason household, and that the householder himself had had great difficulty in supplying the vacancy, she enlarged upon the charms and attractions of Finau,—

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her washing and ironing, her cooking, and her undoubted experience in providing for the comfort of a husband overcome with nocturnal convivialities. To Finau, in Mason's absence, she made returning life a burden. It is better to die than to lie weak and helpless, eating food grudgingly given, and sheltered by an unfriendly roof. And after each of Mason's friendly visits Ana would say, "Why does he come here? Why? because he desires you, of course! I heard him say that your face was beautiful, and that he wanted you to live with him. Drunken? Not more than Falani or the other white men, and when he is drunk he would not ill-treat you. Used to beat Mele, did he? Ah, that was another of Mele's lies! She was always seeking an excuse to leave him, because she liked Lavuso better. No. Jone Mesoni was not the man to beat his wife unless she deserved it, and even then not hard with a stick, but with his hand!"

And so at last, when one evening Mason came with a bigger *kava-root* than usual, and took his bowl from Finau's hands, and stayed after the others had gone, she, feeling bitter anger in her heart towards the man, but a greater bitterness towards the relations who

drove her from their door, would resist no more. Mason wasted no time over courtship. He crawled over to where she sat, and roughly threw his arm round her in the presence of them all. She pushed him away with a gesture of disgust.

"Finau," he said, in a voice broken with vinous emotion, "it is well that we should live together. You will come to my *abi* to-morrow?"

Finau sat with her face hidden in her hands, but Ana, the matchmaker, answered for her.

"Yes. I will bring her before mid-day, so that she may prepare dinner."

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The steamer is in again from New Zealand. After the miscellaneous crowd of natives from the southern islands have disembarked, and sniffed and wept over their friends of Vavau, there is a flutter of excitement among the onlookers.

"*Dies kann doch nicht Franz Kraft sein, Pots Tausend! was für ein eleganter Herr!*" cries Karl Müller; for lo! Franz Kraft, the dishevelled, the disreputable, shaved, transfigured, and glorified in a black coat and billycock hat, silver-mounted walking-stick in hand, is there. And more than this, Franz Kraft is leading a

lady over the gangway, for all the world as if he were handing her out of a tram-car at the Thiergarten-gate. His old boon companions whisper together in derisive curiosity as Franz, affecting not to see them, paces the wharf with dignity, his companion on his arm. She, poor thing, makes a curious figure against the palm-trees and white sand—for black satin, white cotton stockings, and German hats do not go well with palm-trees.

She was looking timidly and wonderingly at the mean iron-roofed houses that line the beach, for the cunning Franz had crammed her flaxen head with pictures of South Sea splendour, in which Neiafu appeared as a city, and Franz himself as a benevolent planter of great possessions. Of her future home Franz had been reticent, but she had formed a mental picture of a mansion she had seen in a printseller's window in the *Unter den Linden*, all colonnades, and cool palms, and haunted by numbers of dusky servants. The city must be farther inland, she thought, as they passed up the beach. They were opposite a tumble-down wooden house, larger than the rest. It might be, she thought, a small *wirthhaus*, where they drank beer in the back garden. She timidly asked Franz. "It's the king's

house," he answered roughly. Surely he must be joking, for he had told her so much about the king's palace, and the soldiers, and the rest of it. Yes; certainly Franz must be joking, for her great strong Franz could make jokes sometimes.

A few steps more, and Franz stopped—stopped at the meanest hovel of them all,—a rickety wooden cottage, with iron roof, perched above the sea, without even a tree to give shade or a fence to hide its ugly squalor from the road. Telling her to wait, he went to the next cottage and returned with a key. She was speechless with astonishment and a vague fear. The door swung back, and he beckoned her to follow. Within was a damp, ill-smelling, little shop, with dirty stained counter, and shelves tenanted only by a few rusty tins of meat. Beyond this a small unceiled room, furnished with a bare deal-table, and dirty like the shop; and beyond this again a room containing a canvas stretcher, overhung by a rotting mosquito-screen. That was all, and the all was pervaded by the sickening rancid smell of *copra*, and unspeakably dirty. The windows showed a large iron shed in which *copra*, the currency of the country, was stored. This was the home he had brought her to!

And away there in Berlin her father, the stationer, was still boasting of the brilliant marriage she had made.

It took two days for Franz to appear in his usual oily shirt-sleeves at the counter, and he did not respond to the inquiries about his wife. Thenceforth she became a person of mystery, for she was not seen at all for two months; and when she did leave the house, there were lines about the meaningless mouth, and the blue eyes were dull and red. Franz now ventured on his first social entertainment. The guests were bidden, and Franz, in a clean shirt, received them in the sitting-room,—nine in all, including the two ladies of the place. There was an awkward pause, for Frau Kraft had not appeared. Then Franz went into the bedroom to bring their hostess. There was a whispered altercation, then silence, then a burst of sobbing—and before he returned his guests had all fled. Not even the faithful Müller stayed to break the square black bottle that was to have been the gist of the entertainment. Scandal was now satisfied, for it was evident that Franz did not get on with his wife, and was not above striking her.

But the *copra* season had begun, and Kraft, if he

would live, must buy *copra* like the rest. Early one morning he started with his wife for Halaufuli, where Fisher, a friendly rival, had a station. Fisher's house adjoined John Mason's modest establishment. The Krafts were given the only bedroom in the house—a long low room, in which a platform filling up the end and covered with a pile of mats and a mosquito-screen formed the bed.

When Mason, the man who could not beat his wife, steered an oblique course towards his door, stumbled in, and, being a little less drunk than usual, succeeded in finding his walking-stick, he was at that stage of inebriation when the punishment of somebody for something seems to a man a solemn and sacred duty. Unluckily poor Finau had heard him coming, and ran to his rescue. He fell upon her savagely. Her shrieks broke through the wooden walls, and interwove themselves with Kraft's dreams. Suddenly he hears his own name, and starts from his sleep to listen to a voice he knows crying in an agony of need. It is Finau calling to him, and without thinking where he is, he springs up to go to her rescue. A blow or two directed by the dim light of the kerosene lamp disposes effectually of Mason,

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and Franz, furious with anger, yet not knowing what to do, creeps back to his room. His wife is still asleep, as he can hear by her regular breathing; but Finau has followed him, and whimpering she creeps into the room, and leans sobbing against the wall. What could he do—this man who has so injured her? She had loved him and suffered for him. Was he to cast her out when she came to him in her need? And what harm was there in protecting her? He whispers to her not to be afraid and to stop crying, but she only sinks to the ground and sobs the louder. When he speaks again she creeps towards him, as if in bodily fear of the man who has been left outside the door. Franz looks at the screen: his wife still sleeps. And so he speaks to her in a low voice, and strokes her bowed head, and she, in the abandonment of her wretchedness, puts her arm round him. And as he murmurs comforting words to her in her own tongue, he chances to look towards the bed where the dim light is burning, and as he looks there is a movement, a hand from within lifts up the screen, and eyes with a life's tragedy written in them look out at him.



## IN THE OLD WHALING DAYS.

### I.

**I**N those days, sir, there were no white men living on Kandavu, but many whaling-ships used to come and lie at anchor for months at a time. Run away? Why, the crews always ran away. We used to persuade them to run away by means of our women, and then we caught them, and tied their hands, and hid them in the forest until a reward was paid by the captain—a musket sometimes, and many knives and axes. They were not white men like you, sir, but they had dark skins like the Indian interpreter, and came from a land called “Portugee.” These men were very wicked; but there were others with them with blacker skins who were less wicked: their place was only to serve the rest and prepare food. Yes, some of

us used to sail away with them—some from curiosity because they wished to see other lands, and others because the chiefs sent them, being persuaded with great rewards.

It was with Captain Aneli that I first sailed. We went hence to Vatulele, my mother's island, and lay there several weeks, helping the Vunisalevu against Korolamalama, by lending him muskets and powder, and by sailing round to the rocky point, where we shot many as they fled from their enemies on the land. Ah, the captain was a good man, and the Vunisalevu loved him well! No; he asked for no reward, but did this out of his great love for the Vunisalevu, whose brother the people of Korolamalama had killed. You may see the site of the town away here among the caves at the western point; but do not go there, sir, at night or alone, for the spirits that dwell there hate white men as they hate us. The people are all gone, except the women, of whom my mother was one, for they were more numerous than we; and when Captain Aneli would go, the Vunisalevu strove to detain him, lest, when he was gone, they should take their revenge. But the white man was wise, and imparted to us his wisdom, saying, "Invite

them to a feast and slay them ;” and the Vunisalevu, knowing that conquerors do not make feasts for the conquered, sent a messenger bidding them plant bananas for him. But they were afraid, and answered that they would send all their bananas and yams rather than come themselves, and with their answer was brought a whale’s-tooth to turn the chief’s heart. But he refused the tooth, and sent again, saying that it was not meet to suspect plots in time of peace, and that he would pledge their safety, for they might come armed while he and his people would be without weapons, but would peacefully bring up the feast as hosts should do to guests.

And when the appointed day came, the captain pitied him, and landed thirty men, who hid among the bushes where you see those *ivi*-trees, and the Korolamalama men came, two hundred strong, each with his bundle of young banana-shoots, his spear in his left hand, and his throwing-club in his girdle. None were left behind, for they feared lest, if they were divided, we might attack them. As for us, we were hidden in the undergrowth along the path, our arms hidden near us where we could find them ; and for the feast we had brought a rotten *taro* each in

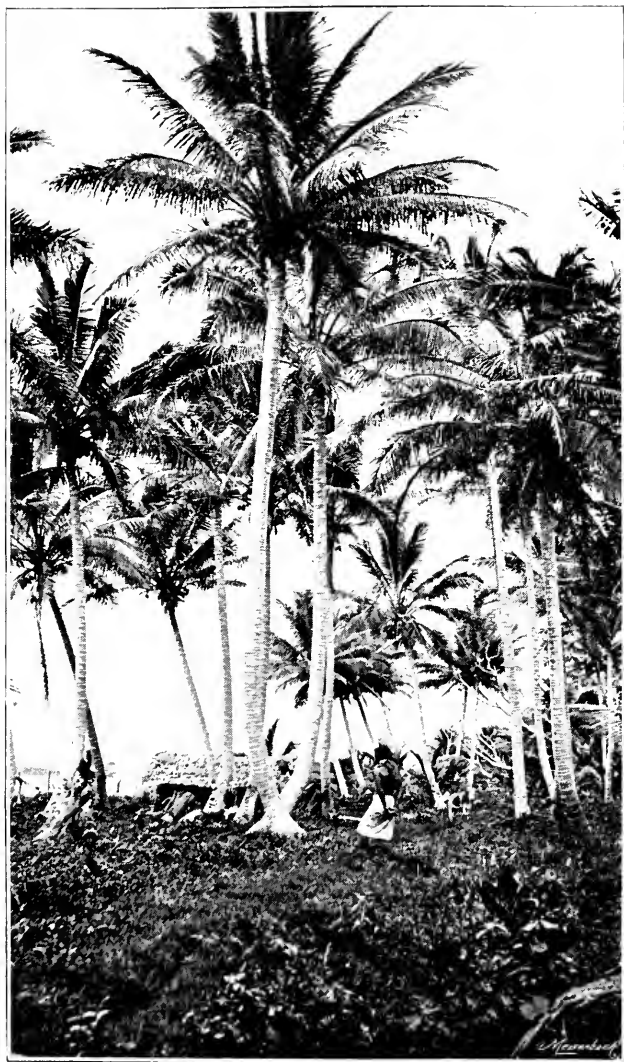
derision of our enemies, who were to die that day. We would have set on them at once, but the white men said, "Not so, let them first plant your bananas, so that they be wearied, and you will have made use of them as long as they can be useful." This wise counsel pleased us; so we waited, and even came unarmed to look at the men as they sweated beneath the sun, digging the holes and stamping the earth round the shoots, each man with his spear stuck in the ground behind him: and as we watched we saw that, when a man moved on to dig a fresh hole, he first moved his weapon to the new place. And as the sun dipped towards the west, slanting the black shadows of the *ivi*-trees across the clearing, we went for our *taro* and heaped it ceremoniously beneath the shade of the trees, and sat down to present it to them. And they, seeing us unarmed, were ashamed to bring their spears with them, for it is forbidden by our customs to receive the feast with arms. So they left their spears, each man where he had been digging, and came and sat before us. And while they sat with their backs to the clearing, the boys crept among the newly planted bananas as if playing, and took their spears, heaping dead grass upon them so that they

could not be seen. Then Mavua the herald took a decayed root of *yangona*, and going forward, presented it and the feast in the customary words, and their herald came forward to touch the feast. But when he took the root and saw that it was rotten, and touched the *taro* and knew that it was decayed, he was speechless a moment in fear and anger, for the insult was very gross. Then he leapt to his feet, crying, "A plot! a plot! we are undone to-day." And they sprang up to go for their spears. But we had snatched up ours already, and were upon them, stabbing and spearing them as they dodged among the bananas looking for their spears.

But when they saw that they were gone, the herald uttered a great and bitter cry, cursing us and bidding them follow him, and he ran for the forest towards the west where Korolamalama lies; but there he met the white men, and from the tree came the thunder of the muskets and the bark of the little guns, and cries, and evil words, and a thick smoke, while we lay on our faces in the clearing hearing the bullets scream over our heads. And when some of them ran back to escape the guns, we stabbed at them, smiting some, and driving some back again to the white men,

so that when all was done, only one was left alive of them all, and he, being found hiding in a water-hole, was dragged out and led to the beach among the boys, and Uluisau held his arms while the boys beat him to death with their toy clubs.

Then the bodies were dragged to the town. To be eaten? How should I know, when I was sent with the others to Korolamalama to fetch the women and children? And when we neared the place they thought that we were their own men returning from the banana-planting, and they came out to meet us. But the two who saw us first ran shrieking to the others, and Butho, he who held the basin at the missionary collection last Sunday, followed close after them, making signs to us to keep unseen. And he deceived the women, saying that their chief had sent him to bid them bring crabs and yams to him in the plantation (for they had just come from fishing on the reef). But they, still doubting him, half followed and half held back, until they reached the thicket where we lay. Then Amori, whose husband we had slain, raised a great uproar, crying to the others to flee, for there was treachery; and they scattered into the bush, screaming like a flock of



*"Nothing now remains of Korolamalama but the name and a few mounds."*





paroquets. But Butho, who feared nothing, flung his *ula* at the woman Amori and struck her on the back so that she fell on her face, and he slew her with his club where she lay, and we others pursued the women, striking down the elderly, who made the greatest uproar, and saving the young girls alive. These we led with the children to the Vunisalevu.

Did they weep? No; they dared not weep, for Butho, the fearless, who led us, told them that she who first wept aloud should die; and thereafter, when Ina, the daughter of Naikele, lifted up her voice, he struck her on the mouth with his short throwing-club. Ah! she was never called "Ina the beautiful" more, for her teeth were all broken, and her nose crushed, so that no man desired her as before, and she became a kitchen-woman, and carried firewood for the chief's kitchen all her days. So the women feared to weep aloud lest Ina's fate should befall them.

Ah, it was a great victory! Nothing now remains of Korolamalama but the name and a few mounds. Therefore the Vunisalevu was very glad, knowing that the right was triumphant, and that vengeance could never come again from Korolamalama. The white

man? Oh, he was very grateful to them of course, for they had helped him out of their great love for him, and they asked for no reward, nor would they take one when it was offered to them—neither oil, nor mats, nor timber, nor anything of value. The captain was a good man, not like the white men of this day, who will cheat their own fathers for the sake of gain, but a generous man and a right-doer. His crew, perhaps, were wicked men, for they swore much and fought among themselves, so that we all feared them. What? How many times must I tell you that the captain wanted no reward? Nay, more, for as the women of Korolamalama were many, and food was scarce at the time, he offered to take some away; and the chief bade him come and choose from among them, and he came at night with four of his sailors. And all the women were brought to the chief's house trembling, for they thought that evil was to befall them as the others. And the captain took a lantern and held it in the face of each in turn, taking hold of any that shrank back. And when he had seen all, he pointed to Sili and to Manana and to Latia, as the three whom he had chosen. And we were all surprised, for we thought that he would have

chosen strong women who would work; but those he had pointed to were young maidens, children, and useless for work. The first two were the daughters of the woman Kurulawa, who stood by, and of low rank, but Latia was a chief's daughter, and beautiful. But when the Vunisalevu told them they were to go with the white man, and the sailors came to take them, they cried aloud to the men to save them, and the other women caught them in their arms and wept, so that there was a very great uproar. But the sailors shook them all off except the woman Kurulawa, and her they struck, so that she fell upon the mats. Then they bound the hands of the three girls with ropes, and put pieces of wood in their mouths, and so stopped their cries—for one could not hear the other speak for the noise they made when they knew that the white men would take them.

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I wonder where those women are now, if they be still alive! They were not on board when Captain Aneli came back the next year, and I forgot to ask him about them.

## II.

Ah, the white men of that day were braver than the white men who live among us now—be not angry, sir, if I say this—and Captain Aneli was the bravest of them all! Many great deeds he did in these seas besides the burning of Korolamalama and the slaughter of its people. I sailed eighteen months with him, and saw much fighting, not only upon the land but upon the sea also—among ourselves who sailed together. But Captain Aneli was fearless, and we all dreaded him after he slew the big white man and the Portugee who rebelled against him, and had flogged the Indian who prepared the food until he died. He loved me well, and gave me great gifts, teaching me to shoot with the little gun, and bidding me be always near him lest the evil-minded among the crew should again rebel against him. But when we reached New Zealand, and had been at anchor but two days, a man came from the shore and seized my captain, binding his wrists with iron fastenings that snapped to like the lock of a musket; and he was led away, shouting many evil words, and I saw him no more. I know not why this was done, but the man must have been one of the

captain's enemies and evil-minded, for he was a just man and brave.

And yet not all the captains of those days were like him, for there were some who were faint-hearted, like the white men of to-day, who think more of the love of women than of war, and whose hearts are weakened like a missionary's. With such a one did I sail as I will relate.

After the captain was taken away we left the ship and dispersed, each going his own way; and I, with Tom the Manila man and others, drank white men's *yangona* in a house by the shore till we were intoxicated, and there was fighting and much anger. I do not know what we did until I awoke in the prison-house. Then I was taken before a chief, who judged me and awarded my punishment. But a man who stood by asked me whether I would sail with him if he released me from punishment, and I, not knowing what would be my punishment by the laws of these white men, and fearing to be flogged, besought him to set me free. So he paid money to the judge, who thereupon looked with favour on him and ordered me to be set at liberty. He was the captain of a two-masted ship, about to sail to the lands of these seas to exchange

cloth and knives and axes for oil and the weapons of the place. And on the day we hove the anchor a white woman came on board, who was his wife, and sailed with him. He was a good man, this captain, but his mind was like a missionary's, and he was not skilled in the ways of the sea. He had a large Bible which he was always reading in the cabin, while the woman lay sick in her bunk; and he often said to me—for by this time I had begun to understand his talk—"This is my compass and my anchor." And once when he said this the mate was near, who, being a godless man but a good sailor, said, so that the captain might hear, "It would be better for the ship if he steered by the compass on board."

Now the crew were like other white sailors, evil-minded, and lovers of forbidden words and strong drink. And even when there was no drink they would fight among themselves, but they all feared the mate, who, when giving orders, spoke but once, and instead of a second word smote, sometimes with a belaying-pin but oftenest with his naked fist, and that was the worst, for his arm was thick and knotted as yon *dilo*-tree, and with his fist he could have split this rock. But me he did not smite, because I honoured him and did his bid-

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ding cheerfully ; nay, he even loved me, both for this and because my skin was black and I was a stranger, helpless, and without friends. He was a good sailor this mate, and often in the night when I was in his watch he would tell me stories of his cruises in the whale-ships, and I would tell him tales of blood from my own land. But he never spoke of the sea without contemptuous words towards the captain, whom he held to be no sailor but a missionary, accursed among sailors, and less than a man. He despised him, too, that he sailed with a woman, not being like the mate and other good sailors, who held women as fit only for the shore, and had a wife at every port to which they sailed. And I, too, hearing this, despised the captain in my heart, most of all when I saw how he subjected himself to the woman, as no man should do, and tended her as only slaves and low-born do, and they unwillingly. But for all this he was kind to me and did me many services, giving me from the cabin food in tin boxes, such as none other in the ship might taste but he and the woman.

All this time we were sailing northwards, the wind being south-east but light. And the air grew warm, and the spirit-light flashed in our wake at night,

and the flying-fish, the birds of Nukuloa, took wing under our bows, and my heart grew light in the warm air, for I knew we were approaching my own land where only it is fit for man to live. We had left behind us the bitter winds that chill the marrow, and the sterile palmless shores, where men hurry ceaselessly to and fro, never resting but toiling ever, and the heart is filled with darkness and disgust of life and a great longing for rest. But though my heart was glad because I should soon be in that sweet land and see the green yam-vines, graceful as fair women in the dance, the captain became sorrowful, for the woman whom he tended was now sick, and for many days we had not seen her face, though we knew by his looks day by day that she grew worse.

And on the day when the sea-birds first circled the ship, the wind being still fair but falling light, the mate ordered the sailor they called Bill—him with the red beard—to go aloft and shake out the topsail, which was furled; but he not moving quickly, but with murmurs and unwillingly, the mate spoke angrily to him, saying, “Goddam!” many times, and other evil words. Then the sailor turned back and struck the mate, calling upon the others to come and help him;



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for he was a sort of leader among them, through his quarrelsome nature and unwillingness to render due obedience to his chiefs. But the others stood as if uncertain, wishing to slay the mate, and yet afraid. And as he continued calling upon them, two of the crew joined him, and drove the mate against the cook-house, where he stood striking at them, for he was very strong. Then Bill took the cook's axe that stood near and lifted it to strike, and I ran to help the mate, whom I loved. But before I could reach him another passed me very swiftly and flung himself upon Bill, as a falcon seizes a *sese*, and strove with him a moment till both fell heavily upon the deck and rolled, so that Bill was underneath straining for breath, as the other had him by the throat. Then I wondered greatly, for I saw that he who had done this was the captain, whose body was thin and light like the body of a cat, and Bill was like a *bulumokau* for bulk. And when the two others saw what had befallen Bill they retreated towards the forecastle; but the mate followed them, striking them with his fists so that they went down the hatchway as a man who dives for turtle, their feet following them. But when we turned back the captain was gone to his

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cabin, and Bill was still lying on the deck gasping for breath. And that night when it was my watch the mate came and sat with me near the wheel, for the night was clear and calm, and I was steering. He did not speak contemptuously of the captain, but wonderingly, as if he had suddenly become another whom he did not know. And while we still talked a sound came through the cabin skylight near us as of a woman's voice, and of a man weeping. And then the weeping of the man drowned the voice of the woman, which was weak, and we both knew it for the captain's voice, and the mate got up and went forward saying no word. But my heart was filled with a great contempt for the captain, since I hold it great shame for a man to weep. And a little later the wind died away, and the sails struck the mast with a noise like musketry, and then filled and struck again with the breath of the dying wind, and then hung loose from the yards as dead vines hang from the limbs of the *damanu*-tree; for even the swell was calm, so that both the air and the restless sea were dead, and the ship lay under the stars as still as a canoe left on the sands by the ebbing tide. And when the bell had struck one, and the dawn was near, I lay upon the hatchway wishing

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for sleep. And suddenly there was a terrible cry, so that we all started up asking ourselves whence it came and what it meant, for it was not the voice of a man but of some fierce animal. Then it came again, and we knew that it came from the cabin, and was the captain's voice, but changed as the voice of a man whose senses have left him. And when it came a third time the mate said that the woman must be dead, for the captain's voice was changed by grief, and he was calling the name of the woman, who would never answer him more. But after the third time the cry did not come again, but only a low moaning, continuously, as I have heard a man make after the battle when he has been clubbed, but his senses have returned to him, and he knows that they who are taking him are heating the oven for his body. And when the sun rose no wind came to fill the sails and cool the air. And beside the ship lay her image, complete to the last rope, as clear as in those glasses the traders sell to the women. And as the sun rose higher the sky turned to iron, and the sea threw back the brightness so that it burned the eyes; and the pitch grew wet in the seams and scorched the bare feet, gluing them to the deck. And we lay under the

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shadow of the masts and sails panting for breath. Only the sailmaker worked, making a hammock for the body of the woman. And all the while the moaning in the cabin never ceased, even for a moment. And when the sun was overhead, all things being prepared, the mate went to the cabin with the sailmaker. And we heard blows upon the cabin-door, and the captain was loudly called; but however loudly they knocked or called, when they ceased they still heard the moaning, mingled with broken words. So the mate came to us again, saying that he would wait until eight bells, and then force the door, for the weather was hot and the matter could not be delayed. But when eight bells were struck, the moaning still continuing, the mate called me, and I took the hammock and followed him down the companion. And the mate called loudly and struck upon the door. Then we listened and heard the voice as of one who sleeps and dreams evil dreams. Then stepping back, the mate ran upon the door, striking it heavily with his shoulder, and the door burst in, and the mate fell forward with the door into the cabin. And I, looking in, saw a foolish sight, for the captain was sitting on the floor of the cabin and had the body

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of the woman clasped in his arms as a mother holds her suckling child. And the woman was an ill sight, for she was axe-faced, like all the white women, and the flesh had left her face in her sickness, and being dead the eyes stared upward and the jaw had fallen. Yet for all this the captain, not seeing us, kissed the dead face as is the white man's fashion with the lips, and moaned unceasingly. Then the mate touched him and spoke, but he seemed not to know him, and his eyes became fierce, and he cried to us to leave him. Seeing that we could do nothing without using force, we left him for that night. But when the morning came and there was still no wind, the mate again bade me follow him, and called to him also the carpenter and the boatswain, and we four entered the cabin and found him sitting as before, only quieter, but the woman's face was much changed. And the mate spoke brave words to the captain, bidding him have courage and allow the woman's body to be buried. And when he understood why we had come, and saw the hammock, he became like a wild sow who is wounded with a spear and turns to protect her young ones. Even so he turned to defend the body of the woman. But the mate seized him, and,

with the help of the carpenter, held him fast, while we dragged the body from him. But so changed was it that it would not go into the hammock. So we carried it on deck out of his sight, while he struggled with the others, and the sailmaker ripped the hammock and sewed it up in haste, enclosing a shot at the feet. And when all was ready we carried it amidships and laid it on a grating, with a flag over it, and the mate nailed up the captain's door lest he should do some fearful thing. Then the mate said some sacred words,—not many, for he could remember only a few,—and the men, being impatient lest ill-luck should befall the ship, threw up the grating and the body splashed into the sea, breaking the image of the ship into a thousand pieces. But scarcely had it sunk when it sprang up again as if alive, and most of the sailors fled in fear thinking it to be alive. But the mate, knowing the cause, cried that the shot was not heavy enough seeing that the body was much swollen. He shouted to us to pierce the hammock quickly to make the body sink. So a boat was lowered, and as no other would do it, I was sent with a sharp boat-hook to pierce the hammock. Now the body had drifted a few fathoms from the ship,

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and still danced up and down upright and immersed from the waist downwards. And as the boat drew near, and I stood up in the bows, I thought I saw the axe-face grinning at me through the canvas, and drawing away from me, so that I almost feared to strike lest it still lived. Then one of the sailors in the boat cried, "It is alive and will drown us!" and I held my hand in terror lest I should strike a live woman. But the mate cried from the ship, "Strike!" and I turned and saw that the ship was turning so that we were nearly opposite the cabin window, and the mate and all the sailors were beckoning to me to strike quickly. Then courage came to me, and standing up in the boat I struck at the woman with the boat-hook as a man strikes at his enemy with a spear, but as I struck, the woman only danced up and down the more, rocking to and fro, so that I could not strike hard to pierce the canvas. Then one of the men in the boat laughed to see the woman dance up and down so, and I laughed too, so that my arm became weak. But the mate cried to me again, and I balanced myself as a harpooner does before he strikes the whale, and as I balanced the boat-hook I turned and saw that the ship had swung so that we were

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opposite the cabin windows. Then with all my force I threw the boat-hook into the soft body and drew it out again. . . .

But as I struck there came a great and terrible cry from the ship, and I turned and saw the captain's face at the window waving bleeding hands to me; for with his hands he had beaten out the thick glass, and he strove to force his body through but could not. Then he cried aloud again, such a cry as once I heard a man utter at Serua whom we had trapped in a cave whence there was no escape, and then his head fell forward and he was still. And the woman's body which I had pierced sank slowly beneath the sea. But when they lifted the captain they found that he was dead, though his body had sustained no hurt.

Now I think that this white man was the most foolish of all the white men in the world, for though white men commit great foolishness for the sake of women, because of their beauty, yet none are so foolish as to desire their dead bodies, and this woman was not beautiful even when she lived, for she was axe-faced.



## THE FIERY FURNACE.

OF the ancient Fijian ceremonies few now survive.

The early missionaries are unjustly charged with bigotry and Philistinism, in having waged war on all native ceremonial connected, however remotely, with their heathen creeds. But the Wesleyan missionaries were before all things practical, and knew that if Christianity was to take root at all it must have bare soil, from which every weed had been carefully torn up; for savage converts have an easy-going tendency towards engrafting Christianity upon their old beliefs,—in discovering that Jehovah is only another name for Krishna or Ndengci, and that the ritual that pleased the one cannot be unacceptable to the other.

But in one corner of Fiji, the island of Mbengga, a curious observance of mythological origin has escaped the general destruction, probably because the worthy

iconoclasts had never heard of it. Once every year the *masáwe*, a dracæna that grows in profusion on the grassy hillsides of the island, becomes fit to yield the sugar of which its fibrous root is full. To render it fit to eat, the roots must be baked among hot stones for four days. A great pit is dug, and filled with large stones and blazing logs, and when these have burned down, and the stones are at white heat, the oven is ready for the *masáwe*. It is at this stage that the clan Na Ivilankata, favoured of the gods, is called on to "leap into the oven" (*rikata na loro*), and walk unharmed upon the hot stones that would scorch and wither the feet of any but the descendants of the dauntless Tui Nkualita. Twice only had Europeans been fortunate enough to see the *masáwe* cooked, and so marvellous had been the tales they told, and so cynical the scepticism with which they had been received, that nothing short of another performance before witnesses and the photographic camera would have satisfied the average "old hand."

As we steamed up to the chief's village of Waisoma, a cloud of blue smoke rolling up among the palms told us that the fire was newly lighted. We found a shallow pit, nineteen feet wide, dug in the sandy soil, a stone's throw from high-water mark, in a small clearing among

the cocoa-nuts between the beach and the dense forest. The pit was piled high with great blazing logs and round stones the size of a man's head. Mingled with the crackling roar of the fire were loud reports as splinters flew off from the stones, warning us to guard our eyes. A number of men were dragging up more logs and rolling them into the blaze, while, above all, on the very brink of the fiery pit, stood Jonathan Dambea, directing the proceedings with an air of noble calm. As the stones would not be hot enough for four hours, there was ample time to hear the tradition that warrants the observance of the strange ceremony we were to see; and so seated on the spotless mats in Jonathan's house, I listened while a grey-headed elder told me the story, pausing only to ask his fellows to corroborate, or to supply some incident that had slipped his memory.

"On an evening," he said, "very long ago, the men of Navakaisese had collected in their sleeping-house for the night. Now the name of that house was Nakauyema. And they were telling stories, each trying to surpass the other in the story that he told. And one of them, whose name I have forgotten, called upon each to name the reward (*nambu*) he would give him for the story he was about to tell; for it is our custom

thus to encourage a good story-teller, each one bringing to him on the morrow the *nambu* he has promised. And some promised one thing and some another. But Tui Nkualita, a chief and warrior of the Na Ivilankata clan, cried 'My *nambu* shall be an eel!' Then the story was told, and the night passed. And on the morrow Tui Nkualita remembered the spring called Namoliwai, that he had seen a large eel in it. And when he came to it, and, kneeling on the brink, plunged his hand into it, he could not feel the bottom though the water reached his shoulder, for the pool was deeper than formerly; and he reached yet farther down, following the rocky hole with his hand, and he touched something. He drew it out, and saw that it was a child's cradle-mat. Then, wondering greatly, he plunged his arm into the pool, and reached yet farther down, and touched something. And as he felt it, he knew it for the fingers of a man. 'Whoever this may be,' he said within himself, 'he shall be my *nambu*.' And he plunged half his body into the water, feeling with his hand until he touched a man's head. Then grasping the hair he dragged it upwards, and planting his feet firmly, he drew forth the body of a man, and held it fast on the brink of the spring.

“‘Whoever you are,’ he cried, ‘you shall be my *nambu*.’

“‘You must save me,’ answered the man, ‘for I am a chief, and have a village of my own, and many others who pay tribute to me.’

“‘What is your name?’

“‘Tui na Moliwai (chief of Moliwai).

“‘I know all the chiefs of Mbengga, and many also on the mainland, but I never heard of Tui na Moliwai. I only know that you must come with me and be my *nambu*.’

“‘Have pity on me, and let me live.’

“‘Let you live? Why, of what use will you be to me alive?’

“‘I will be your guardian spirit in war.’

“‘No. Mbengga is small, and I am mightier than all others in war.’

“‘Then I will be your god of safe voyages.’

“‘I am no sailor. My home is the land, and I hate the sea.’

“‘Then let me help you on the *tinka*-ground.’

“‘When the game is played my lance flies truer and stronger than them all.’

“‘Then I will make you beloved of women.’

“‘I have a wife who loves me, and I want no other. What else?’

“‘Then I will do more than all these. You shall pass unharmed through fire.’

“‘If you can do that I may spare you; but if you fail you shall be my *nambu*.’

“Then the god gathered brushwood together, and piled it with stones in a little hollow, and made fire, and lighted it, and they sat down to wait until the stones grew hot. And when the wood had burned to ashes, and the stones were red with heat, the god rose and took Tui Nkualita by the hand, saying, ‘Come, let us go into the oven.’

“‘What! And be roasted while living?’

“‘Nay,’ returned the god, ‘I would not return evil for good. It shall not burn you.’

“Then Tui Nkualita took his hand, and lay on the hot stones, finding them cool and pleasant to his body.

“And Tui na Moliwai said, ‘You shall stay four days in the oven, and be unhurt.’

“‘Four days! And who shall find food for my wife and children while I am there? No! Let me only pass through the fire as I have done, and come out unharmed. I ask no more than this.’

“‘It is well. This gift shall be yours and your descendants’ for ever. Whether you stay here or go to other countries, this power shall remain with you.’

“So Tui Nkualita let Tui na Moliwai go alive, and returned to his home at Navakaisese, telling no one what had befallen him. But on the day when *masáwe* was cooked at Wakanisalato, and the oven was heated, Tui Nkualita rose and sprang into the great pit, trampling the burning stones unharmed, and treading down the green leaves as they were thrown to line the oven, so that he was hidden in the steam. And the people raised a great shout, wondering much when they saw him come out alive and unharmed. Thus it came about that whenever *masáwe* is cooked in Mbengga, the people of Rukua and Sawau must first leap into the oven to make the baking good; and if yams or other food were put into the oven with the *masáwe*, they would be taken out at the end of four days still raw.

“Last year we went to a great feast at Rewa, and one of the Rewa chiefs jested with us as we stood by the ovens, saying, ‘Come, leap into our ovens, as you do into your own.’ And we told them that it is *tabu* to say this of any oven but the *masáwe* oven, and that the

food in the smoking-pits would not be cooked. And our words came true, for when the ovens were dug they found the pig and the yams raw as they were put in."

When we were at last summoned, the fire had been burning for more than four hours. The pit was filled with a white-hot mass shooting out little tongues of white flame, and throwing out a heat beside which the scorching sun was a pleasant relief. A number of men were engaged with long poles, to which a loop of thick vine had been attached, in noosing the pieces of unburnt wood by twisting the pole, like a horse's twitch, until the loop was tight, and dragging the log out by main force. When the wood was all out there remained a conical pile of glowing stones in the middle of the pit. Ten men now drove the butts of green saplings into the base of the pile, and held the upper end while a stout vine was passed behind the row of saplings. A dozen men grasped each end of the vine, and with loud shouts hauled with all their might. The saplings, like the teeth of an enormous rake, tore through the pile of stones, flattening them out towards the opposite edge of the pit. The saplings were then driven in on the other side, and the stones raked in the opposite direction, then sideways, until the bottom of the pit was





...When the wood was all out there remained a conical pile of glowing stones."



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covered with an even layer of hot stones. This process had taken fully half an hour, but any doubt as to the heat of the stones at the end was set at rest by the tongues of flame that played continually among them. The cameras were hard at work, and a large crowd of people pressed inwards towards the pit as the moment drew near. A Zanzibar negro and his wife, drifted from heaven knows where, half-castes with Samoan mothers, with Fijian mothers and unknown fathers, mingled with the crowd of natives from the neighbouring mainland. They were all excited except Jonathan, who preserved, even in the supreme moment, the air of holy calm that never leaves his face. All eyes are fixed expectant on the dense bush behind the clearing, whence the Shadrachs, Meshachs, and Abednegos of the Pacific are to emerge. There is a cry of "*Vutu ! Vutu !*" and forth from the bush, two and two, march fifteen men, dressed in garlands and fringes. They tramp straight to the brink of the pit. The leading pair show something like fear in their faces, but do not pause, perhaps because the rest would force them to move forward. They step down upon the stones and continue their march round the pit, planting their feet squarely and firmly on each stone. The cameras snap,

the crowd surges forward, the bystanders fling in great bundles of green leaves. But the bundles strike the last man of the procession and cut him off from his fellows; so he stays where he is, trampling down the leaves as they are thrown to line the pit, in a dense cloud of steam from the boiling sap. The rest leap back to his assistance, shouting and trampling, and the pit turns into the mouth of an Inferno, filled with dusky frenzied fiends, half seen through the dense volume that rolls up to heaven and darkens the sunlight. After the leaves, palm-leaf baskets of the dracæna root are flung to them, more leaves, and then bystanders and every one joins in shovelling earth over all till the pit is gone, and a smoking mound of fresh earth takes its place. This will keep hot for four days, and then the *masuwe* will be cooked.

As the procession had filed up to the pit, by a pre-concerted arrangement with the noble Jonathan, a large stone had been hooked out of the pit to the feet of one of the party, who poised a pocket-handkerchief over it, and dropped it lightly upon the stone when the first man leaped into the oven, and snatched what remained of it up as the last left the stones. During the fifteen or twenty seconds it lay there every fold that touched

the stone was charred, and the rest of it scorched yellow. So the stones were not cool. We caught four or five of the performers as they came out, and closely examined their feet. They were cool, and showed no trace of scorching, nor were their anklets of dried tree-fern leaf burnt. This, Jonathan explained, is part of the miracle; for dried tree-fern is as combustible as tinder, and there were flames shooting out among the stones. Sceptics had affirmed that the skin of a Fijian's foot being a quarter of an inch thick, he would not feel a burn. Whether this be true or not of the ball and heel, the instep is covered with skin no thicker than our own, and we saw the men plant their insteps fairly on the stone. Clearly eternity can have no terrors for these simple natives.

I think that most of the sceptics were impressed. Even the skipper of the steamer, who was once a conjurer, and ate fire at a variety entertainment, said it was "very fair for niggers," but darkly hinted that he could improve upon it.

Seated by a bowl of *kava* and a candle stuck in a bottle-neck, Jonathan underwent my cross-examination with calm good-humour. Why were the young men afraid? Because only five of the fifteen had ever

passed through the fire before. The regular performers were elderly men, and they had reflected upon our distinguished rank, and the rumour that picture-machines would be brought, and selected good-looking youths rather than ugly old men. The handkerchief was burned? Well, if it had been thrown into the middle of the pit, instead of upon an isolated stone, it would not have been even singed, for the linen being of human manufacture would share the god's gift to men. Would a strange man share the gift? Certainly, if he went with one of the tribe. If I had told him my wishes sooner he would have taken me in barefooted, and I should have found the stones cool and pleasant. Yes, it was true that one of the men had nearly fallen, but the others ran to hold him up. Would he have been burnt if he had fallen? He thought not. Then why were the people so anxious to save him from falling? Well—they remembered a man who fell many years ago, and yes—he certainly was burnt on the shoulders and side, but a wise man patted the burns, and they dried up and ceased paining him. Any trick? Here Jonathan's ample face shrunk smaller, and a shadow passed over his candid eye. "If there had been any trick it would have come to light long ago. The whole world

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would know. Perhaps I do not believe the story of Tui na Moliwai, but I do believe that my tribe has been given to pass unharmed through the fire." Oh, wily Jonathan!

Perhaps the Na Ivilankata clan have no secret, and there is nothing wonderful in their performance, but, miracle or not, I am very glad I saw it.

## FRIENDSHIP.

### I.

“**A** LLEN, come out! Hang it, man, it's not before your time! Why, it's five o'clock.”

“But the boss——”

“Blow the boss! He didn't buy your body and soul for eight-six-eight a-month?”

“But suppose I lose my billet——”

“That's what I want you for. Look here! Life's not worth living at this rate. If it wasn't for my wife I'd have chucked it long ago, for I'm sick to death of stocks and shares: there's no excitement when you make a hit, because you don't win enough, and it's no fun losing, because you always lose too much.”

“Yes. It's all very well for you, Benion,—you can afford it; but if I had half your money, I'd steer clear of specs. altogether.”



"No, you wouldn't, my boy! The only fun of having money left one is to try to make it grow. I expect you chuck some of your wretched screw away betting on these beggarly races where every horse is run crooked."

"Why, how much do you suppose I have over after paying for my living?" asked the younger man, indignantly.

"I know, old chap. Can't think how you manage to live on it as it is. Now, look here! Can you keep your mouth shut?"

"No."

"Don't play the fool. I think you can," said Benion, examining him doubtfully. "I always liked your looks, or I shouldn't want now to make your fortune. I suppose you'd stick to me if I made your fortune?"

"Better try!" laughed Allen.

Benion, with a great air of mystery, drew him out of Macquarie Street among the trees that grew in that part of Sydney which is now called Hyde Park. When they were a hundred yards from any possible listener he unburdened his soul in a hoarse whisper. "There will never be a chance like this again. A schooner came in last night from Honolulu in ballast, and the

two chaps that own her talk of fitting her out for a trading voyage in the islands—in a devil of a hurry too. There was a lot of talk about it, and all sorts of yarns flying about, because people going to the islands aren't, as a rule, in a hurry, and don't mind being asked questions."

"What sort of looking chaps are they?"

"Oh, Yankees, I expect; but they are burnt as dark as niggers, and wear red sashes round their waists with belts over them,—the rig they wear in the islands, they say. Anyhow, when men want a shipload of goods in a hurry, and do the mystery-man about where they're going to, it's pretty clear that there's money in it, and that they don't want any one else to get before them. But I mean to be before them."

"What——"

"You've come here to listen and not to ask questions. If I let you into this thing, which will be worked, mind, with my capital, what will you give in return?"

"Can't give anything but my work."

"Exactly. Well, then, it's this way. I'll make you my partner on a quarter share of all that's made out of it; you on your side promise to work all you know until we break partnership by mutual consent. A

quarter share ought to make your fortune if we have luck ; but when I want a man to work I don't believe in starving him. Now *will* you work, and *will* you keep your mouth shut, and *will* you stick to me ? I don't want any paper—your word will do.”

“Of course I will, Benion. I'll swear if you like.”

“No. A man's word is as good as his oath. If he breaks the one he's bound to break the other.”

The two had come to a stand-still facing each other, but now Benion took his companion's arm, and began to walk rapidly away from the houses.

“This morning,” he went on, “I made friends with one of the schooner's crew. He was just going aboard, but when I talked of drinks he turned back with me. The poor devil had been kept pretty short on board. He wouldn't talk at first, but put the liquor away until at last he got to think I was his oldest friend. He'd deserted from a whaler in Honolulu, and the owners of this schooner got him to sail on double wages at two hours' notice. ‘And all to trade in the islands?’ I said. ‘Islands, be blowed!’ he said; ‘it's something better than that!’ ‘Ah, well, I wish you luck,’ I said, getting up as if to go; but he didn't want to move, and said, ‘And suppose it *was* trading—what then?’

‘Nothing,’ I said. ‘Wal, do yer call *gold* nothing?’ he said, winking with one of his wicked eyes. ‘Don’t come one of your sailor’s yarns over me,’ I said. ‘It’s true, so help me,’ he answered; and then he looked round to see that no one was listening, and leaned forward till I could scarcely bear the smell of gin and tobacco-quid, and whispered, ‘They’ve found gold in Californy, and they’re stuck up for all kinds of trade. The ship that brought the news was leaking like a sieve, and my owners, as keeps a store in Honolulu, bought this schooner and got a crew together in less than a day, and we’re to fill up and get away to-day so as to be the first in the field. If they gets a week’s start *they* won’t have to keep store any more, ’cos bloomin’ nuggets of gold is the only money they use over in Californy, and they can stick it on ’cos the diggers is starving.’ ‘They’ll be getting stuff round from New York,’ I said. ‘That’s what they’re scared of,’ he said, ‘only they think that ships from New York are likelier to bring more diggers than stores.’

“So then I made my friend as drunk as he could carry, and saw him down to the quay, and I went off to find out what the owners had been up to. I found out that they’d been to some of the wholesale houses,

buying up tools and clothing and provisions, and I heard from Jakes that they'd been inquiring for a timber-yard. Well, you know Hathaway's a friend of mine, and when I got to him I found sure enough that my friends had been ordering timber, for a frame-house in the islands, they said, but old Hathaway said there were doors and locks enough for a prison. So I gave the old man the tip not to deliver the order before the end of the week. Didn't give any reasons, and he didn't ask any,—said it would be the devil's own job anyway to get the stuff off to-morrow as the island chaps wanted."

"Then are we going with them?" asked Allen.

"Not much, my boy; we're going without 'em."

"What! Take their vessel, d'you mean?" said the younger man, with open mouth.

"No. There are better vessels than theirs: just listen, and don't ask questions. After I'd seen Hathaway I went to Thorne. I've done a goodish bit of business with him lately. Got him to give me a list of vessels he has lying idle,—seven of them, a bark, two brigs, and the rest schooners: told him a friend of mine wanted a fast boat for the island trade, but the old chap 'd got wind o' something and asked me

whether my friend was Mr Wilson of Honolulu. When he saw that I wouldn't be pumped he doubled the charter. But we came to terms. He will let me have the Amaranth, the smartest thing in port, bark-rigged, seven hundred tons register. She's just discharged, and will be ready for sea as soon as her cargo's aboard. After that I went the round of the wholesale houses. I know some one in each of them, and by a little manœuvring I squared it to have my stuff delivered before Wilson's. Then I saw Hathaway again, and doubled Wilson's order,—mine, of course, to have preference. And, last of all, I engaged the Amaranth's skipper, and got him to pick up a crew to sign indentures this afternoon,—not a bad day's work!"

Allen's bewilderment had been growing at each sentence of his companion's story. "But what will it all cost?" he asked.

"Never you mind about that, my boy. You haven't got to pay for it. If we're quick enough and keep our mouths shut your share ought to be more than all this racket will cost me. Our only danger is a slow passage. The whole town's talking about the business, and even if we get away before the Reindeer—Wilson's schooner—the chances are that the thing will leak out and the

whole town be after us. Now you go home and give your boss notice, and come and breakfast with me to-morrow. We'll go on board in the morning and out with the afternoon ebb-tide, cleared at the Customs for a trading voyage in the islands. Once outside the Heads we can laugh at the Customs and everybody else, for nothing but a steamer could catch us."

Allen found the Benion establishment in a state of disruption. A cart was at the door, and his friend in his shirt-sleeves, none too clean, was sitting on the lid of a box in the hall trying to snap the hasp.

"Just in time, my boy," he shouted; "just sit down here and save me from breaking the Third Commandment again."

Mrs Benion, harassed and red-eyed, was bustling about breakfast. When she had left them her husband whispered, "Talk as if we were coming back in a couple of months. She don't half like my going. Says she dreamt she saw me in the water swimming for my life, and thinks she won't see me again, so we must let her down easy."

It was a miserable breakfast. The poor wife pretended that she had a cold to disguise her tears, and Benion poured forth a flood of artificial and forced

gaiety that deceived no one. But it was over at last, and Allen went out to the street-door to leave the man and wife together. At last Benion pushed past him with his head down, saying, "She wants to say good-bye to you, Allen; go in, like a good fellow, and then follow me down."

He found the dining-room door open. She was standing near the table repressing her sobs with evident effort. She looked him full in the eyes. "You *will* take care of him," she said passionately, "and not let him run into danger,—he is so rash. I can trust you, for he has been so good to you, hasn't he?"

"Of course I will, Mrs Benion; don't be afraid. We'll be back safe enough with our fortunes made before you've had time to miss us." And he left her, hearing her first sob as he reached the door. Inwardly he thanked the fates that he was not married, for he felt vaguely that Benion was doing wrong in going. But of course he would come back safely, or, if anything were to happen, he himself would never return to Sydney to face the sorrow in that woman's eyes.

The Amaranth was taking in the last of her cargo



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when they boarded her. She was full to the hatches, but a small deck-load of timber had to be stowed before they weighed anchor. About three o'clock she ran down to the Heads with the ebb-tide, and dropped her pilot before dark. Once clear of the land, Benion was in the wildest spirits; for they had at least a day's start of the Reindeer, and they were a faster vessel and a bigger one. After dinner the captain was taken into their confidence; but the vision of gold-fields failed to tempt him, and he became restive. He not unnaturally wanted to know why he had not been told before. It was ten to one, he said, that his crew would desert, and where was he to get another? But Benion was prepared for this argument. If the gold-fields were good enough to make the crew desert, they were probably better than captain's wages. Besides, *he* would be answerable to the owners. The crew had been got together in a hurry, and as there had been no selection, there was more than the usual proportion of grumblers. The wages were high, for it would have taken more than a day to get a complement for a cruise among the islands at the ordinary wages; but the islands were unpopular, and the men were half-hearted. When Benion had argued the captain into tacit acquiescence,

he suggested that the crew should be let into the secret. "They've got to know it some time," he said, "and why not now? When they know about the gold they'll be as keen about the voyage as we are."

He was right. From the time the announcement was made the work of the ship went like clockwork, and the voyage ended happily, and without any more grumbling: for since the days of the Argonauts, gold, whether in fleece or nugget, has ever had a powerful hold upon the imagination of sailors.

They made the land at sunrise. It was a perfect morning, fresh, but not cold. Before them were two mountain-ranges separated by a valley which, together with all the low-lying land, was filled with woolly vapour, absolutely motionless, and so level that it looked like the waters of a lake from which the mountain-tops emerged distinct in the clear air like islands. Then the rising sun struck them and crept down their sides in a flood of light till it touched the surface of the lake of vapour, tinging it with gold; and, as if by magic, the whole lake was set in motion, and rolled up the valley, where it was caught by the sea-breeze and whirled in great convolutions into the higher air, where it vanished.

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They steered for two low promontories, upon one of which stood a ruinous fort bearing the Mexican flag. As they neared it the swell increased, for they were approaching the bar. The sea, so calm outside, broke angrily upon a sunken reef on their left, but the flood-tide helped them, and in a moment they were floating in calm water beyond the fort, with a magnificent view before them,—a broad sheet of water indented with coves and backed with pasture and woodland of the brightest green. The foreshore was less beautiful, for the tide was still low, and the beach was a waste of mud, from which a fetid steam had begun to rise that set the landscape a-dance. They dropped anchor between two barks that had every appearance of being deserted. Their running-gear was hanging loose, their yards were braced all ways as for a funeral, and their decks were littered with stores and rubbish as if the crew had left them in haste. Stranded on the mud was the hull of a schooner, her top-hamper touching the ground as she lay careened over. On shore the only dwellings to be seen were some ruined walls, round which a number of rough shanties of packing-cases, wreckage, and ships' copper were clustered, and beyond these some hundreds of tents gleamed white in the morning sunlight from

the fringe of forest trees. Such was the city of San Francisco in 1849.

Benion and Allen lost no time in going on shore. They stepped from the boat into a crowd of the hangers-on of the gold-field,—surely the strangest seething of humanity that the modern world can show ! There were men of every nation and shade of colour, of every grade of society, of every creed and occupation, all flung together with the burning fever of gold-hunting hot upon them. And there were besides the ministers to their pleasures, their necessities, and their vices : storekeepers, without stores to sell ; faro-bank keepers ; saloon-keepers, cleared of their stock-in-trade ; and the ministers to yet lower vices. Hundreds of new arrivals, unprovided with the few stores necessary to support life, and unable to buy at the famine prices of the place, were still awaiting the arrival of a ship.

As soon as it became known that Benion had brought stores he was set upon by the storekeepers and liquor-sellers, but he had made a stern resolve to retail everything himself and let no middleman profit from him. But the Reindeer might be in at any moment to compete with him, so that, after fixing upon a site for his

tent, he sent part of his cargo ashore that very afternoon, and ensconced Allen as storeman.

So Allen bartered goods for gold-dust; and as their hoard increased, the friendship that is born of hardships endured in common grew between them.

## II.

The wind that had been blowing fresh all day from the south-east had by evening freshened into a gale, and the schooner was running before it with reefed mainsail. As the sun sank red among the storm-clouds, and lit the western horizon with a lurid glare, something more solid than a cloud interrupted the unbroken line. The man at the wheel saw it, and called the attention of the mate whose watch it was.

“Land ahead, sir!”

“That be hanged for a yarn! There’s no land within two hundred miles of us, and what there is ain’t in that quarter.”

“What is the nearest land?” asked Benion.

“The Fijis. The old man took sights this morning and reckoned we’d pass to the nor’ard of the Fijis some time to-morrow if the wind held. They’re marked in

the charts as high land, and we ought to see them thirty miles off or more." Then shading his eyes with his hand, he gazed at the spot on the fast darkening horizon that looked now more than ever like a cloud. "Why, you must have the jimmies if you call that land!" he said over his shoulder. "Keep her up half a point." He glanced at the compass-card, spat over the lee-rail, and went forward.

In a few moments the white foam-flakes turned to grey, faded and vanished, and night fell like a great black cloth flung over the troubled sea. With the darkness the wind seemed to get stronger, the seas bigger, and the vessel more frail and helpless. She was advancing by a series of bounds as each great roller overtook and lifted her stern, poised and flung her forward, and then surged roaring past her, leaving her as it were stranded in the gulf between it and the next, whose swelling base the stern began again to climb.

At eight o'clock the captain came on deck, glanced aloft and to windward, and ordered the look-out to be doubled. Benion was sitting on the main-hatch smoking, and emitting a shower of sparks from his pipe with each gust of wind.

"Anywhere near land, cap?" he shouted.

"No; but we ought to sight it to-morrow, and in these coral waters one likes to keep a good look-out. You never know when you may hit upon a new reef."

The ship tore through the seas for half-an-hour, when there was a shout from the look-out, "Breakers ahead!"

The captain dashed to the wheel and put the helm down, and the schooner came up into the wind, shivering with the shock of the great seas as they struck her and washed the decks from stem to stern. The wind was howling through the rigging, cracking the sails like whip-lashes, now that the ship was no longer running before it, but a practised ear could hear a distant roar, distinct from that of the wind and seas, that broke on the ship. Both watches were hauling in the sheets and reefing, and then the schooner's head was payed off a little so as to clear the shore, if shore it was. Benion and Allen were straining their eyes to leeward in the hope of seeing the danger, but they could distinguish nothing from the dark waste of grey water.

"This sort of thing makes me wish that we hadn't put all our eggs in one basket," said Benion. "If we had fetched up on that reef and got off it alive, we shouldn't have a penny in the world."

"We ought to have insured the box and shipped it to New York in one of the steamers," replied Allen.

"It seemed such sheer folly to pay the insurance rates that Carter asked, I thought it was better to take the risk of shipwreck. If the gold is lost we shall probably go to the bottom with it. If we get home with it safe we can take it easy all our days. It's a fair risk."

The mate meanwhile had climbed into the top and presently reported that he could see breakers, but that they had cleared the corner of the reef, and might now stand away a little. The ship's head fell off until the wind was again on the quarter, and she was running free. The two men were soaked to the skin with the spray when the vessel was close-hauled, but Benion would not go below to change, feeling that if this were land the captain was at least two hundred miles out of his reckoning, and they might go ashore at any moment. But several hours passed without more alarms, and he at last fell asleep on the hatch in his wet clothes. It was a troubled half sleep, in which every sound entered into his dreams mingled with the monotonous roar of the seas. Suddenly some one in his dream shouted "Land ahead!" There was a rush of booted feet past



him; he started up, and saw a dark mass looming above the ship.

As she came up into the wind a sea struck her forward and stopped her dead, the next seemed to hurl her sideways, and before she could get way on she fell with a reeling shock upon the reef, rolled sideways amid the boiling surf, and each successive wave fell upon her with a hungry yell and swept her from stem to stern, hammering and grinding the wounded hull upon the sharp coral.

At the first shock Benion fell against the starboard bulwarks, and before he could grasp the slippery rail a great sea swept the deck and washed him to leeward into the darkness. Dazed and without power of reasoning, he allowed himself to drift, instinctively keeping his body upright in the water.

Allen meanwhile was still on the doomed ship. He was asleep when she struck, and the shock flung him out of his bunk against the opposite bulk-head. Bruised and stunned as he was, he realised what had happened. The floor of the cabin was at a sharp angle, and the bilge timbers groaned and cracked as each pitiless sea lifted the ship and dashed her on the reef with a grinding crash. To steady himself against the shocks he

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planted his foot against a box over which the water was washing. It was Benion's strong box, that had slid from its lashings under the bunk. What were life worth, he thought, to either of them if this were lost? It were better to die trying to save their fortune than to battle for life, leaving this to certain destruction in the wreck. He grasped it by the iron handle and dragged it up the companion, using all his strength, for it was heavy, and the ladder slanted at a sharp angle. Holding on by the brass rail, he looked out upon the slippery decks. The top-mast, with all its ruin of yards, ropes, and blocks, swung heavily by the wire-rigging and thrashed the deck at every heave of the hull, and several of the crew were hacking at the foremast with an axe. Nearer to him, in the waist of the ship, three men seemed to be making a raft by lashing some spare planks and spars together. Suddenly, with a splitting noise, the foremast with all its wreckage went overboard, and the schooner partly righted herself. As each sea lifted her she gradually came up head to wind, for both anchors had been let go; and she lay there for a space without lifting to the seas, for she was now waterlogged. The crest of every sea swept the decks; but Allen, though blinded and suffo-

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cated by the spray, still held firmly to the cabin-trunk, which protected him from the waves. But a huge sea, gathering volume in the shallow water, swept roaring down upon them, and trembling over the bows, carried everything before it. The whole cabin-trunk gave way with the wrench, and Allen suddenly found himself up to his neck in the water, away from the ship, but still clinging to the brass rail of the cabin-trunk, and still holding the iron handle of Benion's box in his right hand. The water splashing in his face impeded both breath and vision, but he thought he could see the dim outline of the ship to windward. The water was almost calm around him, for he was floating inside the reef, but there was sufficient "send" in the waves to set him steadily inshore. At last the cabin-trunk grounded, rose again for the next wave, struck more heavily, and remained immovable, while the waves surged powerlessly round it. The water was only waist-deep, and Allen, still grasping the precious box, stumbled over the rough coral until he found himself on dry sand, dripping and chilled to the bone by the wind, warm though it was. A dark wall of bush close to him recalled grim stories of cannibal natives. If he was in danger, the first thing to be done was to hide

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the box. Full of this one thought, he dragged it by the handle through the soft sand into the shadow of the trees. The ground was carpeted with the leaves of some trailing vine, that caught his feet and would have thrown him had he not recovered himself against the trunk of a tree. He felt it with his hands. It was gnarled and knotted, and of so great a girth that his extended arms would not reach the half of its circumference. This would be a landmark, he thought, for it must be larger than its fellows. He knelt down and plunged his hands into the sand at the root, tearing up the vines, and scooping out a hole large enough to hold the box; but when he began to lower it into the hole the corners caught the loose sand and half-filled the hole. A third of the box remained above ground, but he dared not delay, for a nervous terror of interruption had seized him. Through the roar of the wind he fancied that he heard other sounds. He shovelled the loose sand against the sides of the box, and, tearing up the vines within his reach, he piled them above it. Then he stood up with a strange feeling of safety and self-reliance. Come what might, if he and Benion escaped, their money was safe. But where was Benion? He remembered for the first time that he had not seen

him since the evening. What if he was the only man left alive? It was a new thought, terrible at first until he remembered the box buried at his feet. If Benion were dead, then all would be his lawfully and without blame. What possibilities would life then have? He had often dreamed on the diggings of what it would be to be rich, but the possibility of riches for him had never seemed near until this moment. He knew the disloyalty of the thought, for close upon its heels came a half-formed wish that Benion might be dead. Gratitude had not died out before this great temptation, for he could be grateful to his benefactor's memory if he could no longer show gratitude to him in the flesh.

While he stood irresolute he heard a distant shout. Not doubting that it came from one of his comrades, he started along the shore in the direction of the sound. In two hundred yards he came to a rocky bluff from which great boulders had fallen upon the sand, forming a barrier right down to the sea at low tide. Through these the sea was dashing furiously, and it was so dark that he dared go no farther. He sat down in a recess hollowed out of the cliff-foot by the sea at high tide, and sheltered from the wind:

his exhaustion conquered, and he fell asleep in his wet clothes as he was.

When he awoke the eastern sky was grey, and broad golden streaks shot up from the horizon. The wind had moderated, but great masses of flying scud told what the night had been. He was stiff and chilled from his wet clothes, but he crawled out from his shelter, and found himself face to face with a man, dripping, cold, and miserable as himself. It was Jansen, one of the sailors, a Norwegian, one of those Allen had seen trying to make a raft. He too had spent the night lying on the shore, and he believed that besides themselves none were left alive. While they were talking the sun rose, and straightway their prospects assumed a less gloomy hue. The wreck was hidden from them by a curve of the shore heavily timbered. They ran to this and saw the schooner dismasted, lying helpless on her side. Every sea washed over her, and she seemed to be breaking up. Landwards the forest was a mere fringe, clothing the foot of great basaltic cliffs that rose sheer to a plateau which they could not see. Every crevice of the limestone had been seized upon by enterprising tree-ferns and banian-trees, and only where the face was so

smooth as to afford no clinging-place was the rock naked.

The two men wandered aimlessly along the narrow strip of sand left between the high tide and the trees, and upon rounding a projecting tree, came suddenly upon a thin column of smoke rising from the outer edge of the bush. Their first instinct was to take cover behind a tree, for they had the fear of cannibals ever before their eyes, but Allen caught sight of a figure crouching among the undergrowth. Cannibal savages do not wear blouses and trousers, nor even red beards, and to whom could such a beard belong but Macevoy, A.B.? They found a group of their shipmates crouching half-naked round a fire of drift-wood, destined, when the smoke should subside, to dry their clothes.

"Jansen and Allen! That makes fourteen. There are only five missing now. Could Castles swim, do any of you know?" asked the boatswain.

"Castles went to the bottom, if he had any swimming to do," growled Macevoy.

The men had got ashore at different times during the night,—some clinging to spars and oars, and others, washed off before they could seize anything, had

swum until they drifted into shallow water. Five only were missing—Benion, the cook, and three seamen; but they might have landed on a different part of the beach. The captain now proposed that two parties should follow the beach in opposite directions, to look for the missing men and to find fresh water, while the rest collected wood for a raft on which to bring off provisions from the wreck before she broke up, for they were desperately hungry. Allen chose to stay with the main body, who soon collected enough fallen timber for a raft, and lashed the logs together with the thick creepers that hung in festoons from every tree. When it was finished the tide had ebbed too far for launching it, and they could therefore do nothing more until the afternoon. They were about to disperse in search of food when one of the search-parties returned carrying a body between them.

“Who is it?” shouted the captain.

“Benion,” answered the leading man.

Allen felt a thrill of guilty anticipation. Then he was dead after all, and the gold would be his! The party came up and laid their burden gently down. He was still alive. They had found him lying, helpless and half-stunned, on the beach with a sprained



ankle, and only strength enough to crawl out of reach of the high tide.

By mid-day they knew all there was to know about their island. It was pear-shaped, and barely a mile in diameter,—a mere lump of limestone pushed up from the ocean-bed, with a fringe of coral at its base. The cliffs were unbroken save in one place, where some old earthquake had split a jagged fissure in the rock almost down to the sea-level. This little gorge, choked with vegetation, would have contained water had the island been larger; but as it was, they could only find a little moisture oozing from the cliff-face. Some of them climbed the gorge to the plateau above, and saw the narrow light-green circle of the reef edged with foam: saw an island near them, and two or three others so far away that they blended with the clouds, but saw no sign of man, nor any hope of rescue but by their own efforts.

As soon as Benion was brought in, Allen was possessed with a fear of being left alone with him. When the raft was launched, he joined the two men told off to go to the wreck. It was evening before they returned, with scarcely any stores, towing the largest of the ship's boats, staved and broken, but

not beyond repair. At night over the fire they took counsel. To stay for more than a week at this place would mean starvation. The island must be one of the Fiji group, which the captain had supposed to be two hundred miles to the southward. Some of them had heard that there were white men there; and the party that had climbed the cliff had seen the outline of a large island down the wind. There was only one course open to them—to repair the broken boat and set sail. Benion beckoned to Allen from the *iri*-tree under which he was lying. The men were some feet away, and they could talk undisturbed.

“Did you bring off the box on the raft?” he asked, eagerly.

“No,” replied Allen; “the cabin was full of water.” Benion started up, forgetting his injury until the pain reminded him. “Good God!” he cried, “it must be there—under my bunk. No one in the ship knew of it but you, and it couldn’t float away. I’ll find it myself to-morrow, even if I smash my ankle looking for it. You seem to take it very calmly,” he added, fiercely; “have you forgotten that your share is in it as well as mine?”

“Forgotten! No; but I am too pleased at having saved my skin to think about it yet.”

“Your skin!” retorted Benion, contemptuously. “What good will your *skin* be to you if you have nothing to put on or into it? If that box is lost, I would to God I might lie where it lies!”

His distress was so great that Allen felt an almost invincible desire to tell him the truth. But why should he tell him now, in his present state of excitement? How could he explain away the lie that had come so readily to his lips? In his excitement Benion would suspect that he meant to steal the money, and then good-bye to any future hope of assistance. Why, Benion might repudiate all his verbal promises of partnership, and he had no writing to show. And had he not worked harder than Benion at the diggings?—been a hewer of wood and a drawer of water while his partner sat at ease? How was he to be recompensed for all this? And his share was to be so little, while with both shares he might live a new life in some country where they would never meet.

“Was the box fixed under your bunk?” he asked quickly, seeing the other’s eyes fixed inquiringly upon him.

“Lashed, do you mean? No. I had it out yesterday, and forgot to lash it again.”

“Then it must have slid out,” replied Allen. “The schooner is lying on her side, and your bunk is now where the ceiling used to be. Don’t be afraid. I’ll go off to-morrow and have another hunt for it.”

But during the night the wind rose again, and at high tide a heavy sea was thundering on the reef where the poor schooner lay in the darkness. The dawn showed a flying scud from the south-east, and a grey ocean streaked with foam. Spray was driving over the wreck, blurring her outline, but it could be seen that she lay lower in the water. The men busied themselves in repairing the boat, and collecting firewood. Some of them scoured the reef at low water, catching small fish and sea-slugs from the pools. Benion dragged himself to a spot whence he could see the wreck, and lay there gazing at her with fierce anxiety, and shuddering as each great sea struck and enveloped her in white foam, as if he felt the blows on his own body. He would not touch food, nor answer any one that spoke to him, and the men left him alone at last, significantly touching their foreheads. “Left ’is wits aboard by the looks of ’im, and wants to hail

them to come ashore," was their diagnosis of the case. Allen came in late from fishing on the lee side of the island, and busied himself at the fire that was farthest from his partner.

The gale lasted all the next day, and brought up drenching rain-squalls; but at midnight it suddenly died away, the stars came out, and from every branch above the sleeping men the crickets burst into song, to the tenor of the little wavelets sucking back the shingle, and the bass of the great ocean-rollers breaking on the outer reef.

The men were astir before daylight to get the raft afloat at high tide. But when the sun rose, and they looked for the dark outline of the stranded schooner, they saw nothing to interrupt the broad golden pathway but a strong eddy in the breaking swell, as if a rock lay beneath the surface. The schooner was gone. Torn, battered, and smashed into match-wood—only her bones lay jammed on the reef; the rest of her was strewn broadcast along the beach where the tide had left it,—broken planks, spars, blocks, casks, chests, and rope half buried in the sand. Benion had one last hope—his box might be among the wreckage in spite of its weight. In his despair he forgot the pain

of his sprained ankle, and half hobbled, half crawled after the men who had gone out to collect the stores worth saving. Kneeling on the sand at high-water mark, he eagerly scanned each man's burden as he passed, asking them whether they had seen an iron-bound box.

"You'll have to go to the reef for that," said one; "iron don't float."

With the few tools they had saved from the wreck the repairs of the boat made rapid progress. Three days passed, and though they had been on half rations, their little stock of bread unspoilt by the salt water was running short. At the most it would last them five days, and they must allow three for the voyage to the westward. On the third day, therefore, the last plank was roughly nailed into its place, and caulked with strips torn from their clothing, a rough sail was contrived from the schooner's jib, and provisions and water were prepared for their start upon the morrow.

Benion had had alternate fits of deep dejection and impotent fury since the destruction of the schooner. He spoke to no one, and would not eat his ration of biscuit though he drank his water greedily. At times he would start up, kneeling on the sand and

shaking his fist at the sky and sea, shouting blasphemies learned at the diggings but forgotten till now; at others he lay for hours, face downwards, on the sand, pillowing his head upon his arm. The men thought him mad and avoided him, and Allen was glad of any excuse for keeping away from him. But on the day before the projected start he had shown no violence, but had lain motionless on the ground hour after hour. They discussed him over the fire at night.

"A chap as won't eat, and has the jimmies, ain't long for this world," said the boatswain, summing up.

"Wish he'd look sharp about it," growled another; "we don't want chaps seein' snakes aboard *that* craft." And he pointed to the boat. Allen had been the first to notice Benion's change of manner, and it filled him with something like remorse. But it was too late to turn back now. After all, if the box had been really lost, as it well might have been, Benion would have had to bear his loss, and he must learn to bear it now. Besides, perhaps he would tell him if they got safe out of the island. Yes; he would tell him, but not now while he was in this state. But however he tried to comfort himself, he was too uneasy to lie down with

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the other men, who were laying in a stock of sleep for their journey on the morrow. In the dim light of the stars he could see, just beyond the shadow of the trees, a figure sitting on the sand looking seaward, and could hear a few broken words brought to him by the night breeze. He could feel, though he could not see, the fierce eyes with a life's longing written in them. He got up once intending to go and speak to Benion, but abandoned the idea before he reached him, so terrible did he seem in his despair; so he lay down watching him, and trying to drive back his better feelings. About midnight he was almost dozing when he sprang into wakefulness at the sound of his own name coupled with a horrible blasphemy. Benion was kneeling erect, his right arm extended seawards and clutching the back of his neck with his left, declaiming passionately. Suddenly he turned, and falling on his hands and knees, began to crawl towards the tree under which the captain and officers of the ship were asleep. He passed into the shadow of the trees, and for a moment was lost to sight. A horrible fear seized Allen that he was mad and intended to kill some one, but uncertainty prevented him from moving. A ray of light from one of the fires faintly illumined the tree-trunk, and into this the



crawling figure emerged from the darkness. Yes; it must be murder that he intended, for now he saw him grasp the captain's gun that was leaning against the tree, but before he could start forward he was crawling away as swiftly and noiselessly as he had come, dragging the gun after him. Then it was not murder of another but of himself. Now he was out again on the sand, and scuffling along the beach upon his left foot and his right knee, nearly as fast as a man could walk. Allen was too horrified to act—he could only watch the receding figure with terror and bewilderment; and with that strange perversity of humour it crossed his mind how funny Benion looked scuffling along with his gun over his shoulder. But when the figure disappeared behind a protruding tree, he yielded to the impulse to follow and watch him. Perhaps he did not mean to kill himself after all. He came out upon the sands, keeping in the shadow of the trees, and near enough to Benion to distinguish his figure in the dim light. After going a couple of hundred yards the hobbling figure became more distinct, and Allen saw that he had stopped. There was not more than twenty yards between them, and he sought for a deeper shadow in which to stand. Just before him was a tree with low widespreading

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branches, that threw the trunk into profound darkness. He crept towards it, lifting his feet high and planting them softly on the sand. Something struck him as familiar in the trunk as he neared it. Yes. Surely it was the tree under which the box was buried! Had Benion halted there by chance, or because he knew the spot? He turned to look for him, and saw that he was creeping towards the tree on the other side of the trunk. Then he must know the spot, and he had brought the gun to defend him from interference. Allen would have run away but for the fear of being overheard. Benion was on his knees now not five yards from him. He could hear his labouring breath, and the rustle of the sand as he dragged his wounded leg over it. As he came up Allen moved so as to keep the tree between them. He stopped at the very edge of the pile of sand and vines that hid the box, and sat down. How did he know so well that it was there without feeling for it? He was going to dig it up with his hands! He must get his breath first, though. Was this the time to rest when any of the men might interrupt him? But no, he was not resting, he was doing something. He was measuring the distance with his gun, pushing the butt forward in the sand, so; or was he going to dig with

it that he leaned forward and put his foot against the trigger-guard as a fulcrum? Good God! No; his head is against the muzzle! "Benion!"

Before the blinding flash had left his eyes, or the report ceased echoing along the cliff, Allen was kneeling beside his partner, whose head—as much as was left of it—was pillowed on the box for which he had died. But only for a moment. The awful shock, while it numbed his senses, brought him realisation of his own danger. The report must have aroused the men by the fire, and if they found him there they might suspect foul play. What mattered the treasure beside such a danger? Leaving the body as it was, he tore through the undergrowth straight inland to the base of the cliff, and groped his way along the rocks so as to pass to the rear of the camp. His naked feet were torn and bleeding from his headlong rush through the bush, but his mind was too intent upon the sounds from the beach to heed the pain. He heard the voices of men in motion, and a loud shout from the direction of the *ivi*-tree. Then they had found the body! They would bring it back to the camp, and he would be missed; perhaps they had even seen his footsteps! If he would escape

suspicion he must mix with the men before they had time to notice his absence. He began to run again and burst out of the bush, heated and breathless, at a spot beyond the camp. He slackened his pace when he saw the fire, but a glance told him that it was deserted. There was a confused murmur from the direction of the *dilo*-tree, and he pressed on in the hope of joining the others unnoticed in the darkness. A few of the men were waving smouldering brands snatched from the fire to fan them into flame, the rest were stooping and craning over each other's shoulders to look at something in the middle of the circle. Allen, striving to suppress his panting breath, pressed forward like the others, but his labouring lungs would not obey him.

"Why, mate, who the —— been chasing you? You're blowing like a black-fish."

"What is it?" asked Allen between his gasps.

"Your mate, Benion, with a hole in his head that you can put your foot into. Why, where have you been?"

Some of the men turned round to look at him, and in the faint light he was not a prepossessing object. His face and hair were dripping with sweat, though

the skin was ghastly white, and his distended nostril and heaving chest showed how fear and physical effort had told upon him.

"Looks as if he could tell us something about it," muttered one of them.

But Allen roughly forced his way through them, and fell on his knees beside the captain, who was giving directions for lifting the body.

"Benion!" he cried. "Good God! Why could he have done it?"

His distress was so evident that his words turned their thoughts in a new direction.

"After all, the pore devil had the jimmies," said the boatswain, "and like as not he kicked the trigger off with his foot: must have got a clip on the head as we went ashore."

The gun was still lying where it fell—the muzzle resting on the dead man's shoulder, and the butt on the sand beside his right knee. The position was so consistent with the idea of suicide, that they at once adopted it.

"Well, it's no good moving him till daylight," said the captain. "Some of you get a bit of sailcloth to cover him with, and let's leave him as he is until

the morning. Now, my lads, turn in and get what sleep you can, for we must be away at sun-up;" and he led the way back to the camp, followed by most of the men. Allen went with them and lay down, pretending to sleep rather than undergo the questions he thought might follow.

They were all astir before daybreak. The captain called Allen, as being Benion's fellow-passenger, and asked him whether he knew of anything that would account for the suicide.

"He had a box," replied Allen, "in which he kept all our money. It was lost in the schooner, and when he found that it was gone he lost his head, as you saw."

"Where were you when the thing happened?"

"I had left the camp on the other side. When I heard the gun go off I ran in and found you round the body. When I left, Benion was sitting here on the beach as he had been all day."

"H'm! You must have been a long time away," said the captain, turning to give orders about stowing the stores in the boat. Then taking with him the mate and such of the sailors as were not employed, he walked to the *dilo*-tree followed by Allen. At its

foot a sailcloth was spread, which had roughly taken the shape of the body it covered. In the grey light Allen could see that one end of it was stained red and caked hard. The captain saw it too, and said, "Don't uncover the poor devil; dig the hole here, and we'll lift him into it just as he is."

Four sailors armed with bits of broken plank began to scrape up the sand so as to form a hollow trench, and as the mound at the back grew higher, the sand slipped down and met the pile Allen had made round the buried chest. In a few moments a shallow trench had been dug, and they lifted the stiff body still covered and lowered it gently into the rough grave.

"Hats off!" said the captain, gruffly, as he stepped to the side of the grave. "Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes. We commit his body to the earth, in sure and certain hope that at the last day he will rise again."

It was all that he could remember of the Burial Service, and he said it defiantly as a man who does his duty regardless of the ridicule he may provoke, and dropped a handful of the coral sand upon the canvas.

"Now shovel in the sand," he said, roughly; "we've done all we can for the poor chap."

Allen was staring on the box. The creepers and sand he had thrown upon it had taken the square form of the lid, and he could scarcely believe that they had not seen it. But there were blood-stains on it. He ran forward and shovelled the loose sand over them with his hands so quickly that the work was done before another could come to his assistance.

Two hours later the crowded boat was running free, and the island, with its fellow to the northward, had taken definite shape.

"We must give it a name," said the mate. "What's it to be?"

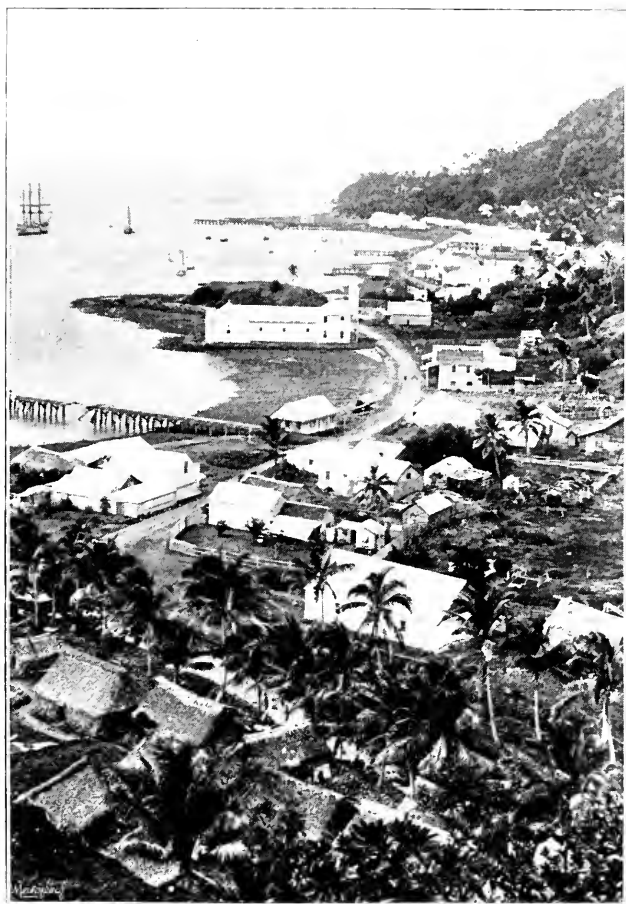
"It looks mighty like a boot from this side," said the boatswain; "and the island to the nor'ward's like a shoe. Let's call it Boot Island."

So Boot Island it was called.

### III.

How they reached Levuka at last, and parted company in that budding centre of idleness and cheap liquor—some to work their passages to Sydney, and others to scatter over the group—need not be related





LEVUKA.



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here. To get away from something that lay on the beach at Boot Island was Allen's one desire. Drink is said to drown memories, so he tried drinking; but it would not wash away certain dull red stains on a background of white sand. And on the morning after the debauch the body and mind are too weak to resist an angry past: besides, what might not a man say when he was drunk? To move anyhow, anywhere, were better than this. So he became a wanderer. But the human mind is fashioned mercifully, and blunts with use. If the body be healthy, there is no impression, however strong, that will not wear away with time. He shipped in a whaler, but almost before the high land had melted into the clouds he wished himself back again. He found so many excuses for himself, and as poor Benion had killed himself, what good could the box do him lying on the beach in Boot Island? The first man who landed would find it and take it away, whereas, if he had it, he would keep only his own share, and send the rest to Benion's widow. He left the ship at the first island they touched. It chanced to be Apemama in the Line Islands, whose king, having vanquished most of the neighbouring atolls, and sighing for other worlds to

conquer, eagerly welcomed a white man who could mend his three "Tower" muskets.

He would stay there, he thought, until a vessel bound for Levuka put in; but month followed month and no such ship came. He rose rapidly from the post of chief armourer to be the king's first minister, and took to himself a woman of the place to be his wife. Ships put in for provisions or to recruit labourers for the South American guano islands; and as the king's adviser, his services to the captains were paid for, and the money hoarded. So three years slipped over his head, and a ship put in at last wanting provisions, and bound to Levuka to fill up with oil. Allen helped the captain to get his provisions, and sold him his stock of pearl-shell, taking in part payment a passage for himself, his native wife, and her niece. The ship got under weigh, and stood on and off the island till night-fall, and Allen, guided by the riding light, paddled off under cover of the darkness, and cast his canoe adrift; for his royal patron had found him useful, and was prone to secure his own comfort without due regard to the inclination of his dependents. At Levuka he found that his countrymen were busy developing the country with muskets and gunpowder. If a tribe

would live it must have as many firearms as its neighbours, and to obtain them it would sell as much land as the foreigner wanted. And so, for ten muskets and a keg of powder, Allen became the possessor of Boot Island, and the vendor, pitying his simplicity, was ready to sell him two other rocky islands on the same terms.

He stood at last, as he had often dreamed, upon the beach where his treasure was buried, and watched the little dinghy labouring out towards the cutter, which presently swooped down upon it and bore it away, running free towards the west. Then he turned to the two women, who sat patiently by the pile of cases on the beach, and pointed to the spot where they had made their camp-fires more than three years ago. They left him to gather sticks, and he passed quickly round the point that hid the *dilo*-tree under which he had buried the box. It was just as he remembered it, save that the ground bore no sign of ever having been disturbed. The creeping vine that lives between soil and sand covered the place with a thick carpet of shiny leaves, and no mound could now be traced. He tried to picture the spot as he had last seen it—the flickering torchlight, the scared faces of the shipwrecked sailors, and the

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blood-stained sand—but the bright sun threw a checker-work of shade through the branches, and a fresh trade-wind bore the smell of the sea to his nostrils, so that the picture would not fit the frame, and the memory seemed less real to him than a nightmare. Surely he had dreamed that Benion's shattered body was buried here! If it was true, where was the grave? and how could the whole place look so bright and peaceful? But the box—that could have been no dream! It was for that that he had come, and he must find it. He went resolutely and stood against the gnarled trunk. Standing thus, as he had stood on the night of the wreck, the box must be buried at his feet, but there was nothing to show that the treasure and its silent guardian lay there together. He stooped and tore away the matted vine, and the coral sand, dulled with vegetable mould, lay bare. Yes, there was a slight swelling of the sand here, but so slight that he could scarcely believe that anything lay beneath it. Some one must have found and stolen it! With a terrible sinking of the heart, that drove out all power of reasoning, he fell on his knees and tore away the yielding sand with his fingers. At the fourth plunge his heart stopped, for his hand struck against something hard. He plunged

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it lower, hoping to feel the square corner, but the thing was round and unfamiliar to the touch. A little lower, and his fingers were beneath it, and with a fierce curiosity he tore it upwards from its sandy bed. It threw the coarse sand from its slippery sides, and lay inert—a shattered skull, with a patch of hair still adhering to it! Allen sat staring with wide eyes at the grinning face as it perched knowingly on a hillock of sand, and then, as it slid over and rolled down towards him, he shrieked yell after yell of mad laughter, and the women, running in the direction of the sound, found him so.

## THE HERMIT OF BOOT ISLAND.

IT was past three o'clock when we cast off the buoy at Mango, and let the schooner go free before the "trade." It was blowing fresh, but she was travelling faster than the seas themselves, and was as steady as a rock. At dusk we were abreast of a precipitous island, steep, too, on all sides but one, which ran off to a sloping point like the toe of a boot. The skipper was gazing earnestly at the dark line of shore.

"That's Boot Island," he said, in answer to my question; "and the other you can just make out to the nor'ward they call Shoe Island. If there was a light on that point I'd have to go in. The old devil that lives there's as crank as a March hatter, and I promised I'd go in if he made a fire on the beach as I was passing. You see he might be sick or something, and no one'd ever know. Nothing but a bird could



land on this side in weather like this. You've got to lie on and off on the lee side and send a boat ashore. There's no anchorage. He's getting very crank. Bickaway, the storekeeper, sent a boat last week for his *copra*, but he wouldn't let him land because it was Saturday. Said he was getting ready for Sunday. The old beggar knew well enough that the boat was chokeful of trade, and he and his women hadn't enough clothes to cover themselves decently. Bickaway yelled to him that his *copra* would be rotten before another boat came, but he stood on the beach and waved him off. Said that he couldn't land before Tuesday, because on Monday he'd be meditating. No, he can't starve. The women take good care of that. Bickaway saw a fine patch of pumpkins and *kumalas*, besides cocoa-nuts. He won't catch fish, because he says it's wicked to take life. There's only the two women on the place besides him—his woman and her niece; and he must be pretty rough on them at times, or the girl wouldn't have swum all the way to Shoe Island, and got picked up by the niggers. They brought her back, too, in their boat, and the old chap let them land, and gave them half his *kumala* crop—he, that don't like niggers, least of all the Yathata niggers! They say he's a Yankee, but

no one knows for certain. I suppose I'm the only white man as ever got into his house, and that was five years ago. Oh! it's a long yarn, and not worth telling. I was '*becch-de-mar-ing*' at the back of Taveuni. Hadn't had any luck, and one of the niggers belonging to Yathata—that's Shoe Island yonder—says, 'Why don't you try Yathata, and the white man's island?' So I went over there in a boat I had, and worked her over the reef at spring-tide in very calm weather. I'd heard a lot about old Simpson, that he wouldn't let any one fish his reefs, because the island was his; but I meant to fish whether or no, as the nigger told me that the reef swarmed with teat-fish, and the Chinamen in Levuka were giving fifty-five pounds a ton. As soon as we let go the anchor, the old devil came out of a lean-to he'd knocked together of packing-cases and rusty iron. He was the damnedest old scarecrow you ever see, with a white beard down to his belt, a filthy old shirt, and blue dungaree pants. I made the boys haul the anchor short and keep lifting it, so as she dragged in, and I stood up in the stern pretending to read a book I had."

The crest of a big sea surging past us lopped on deck, drenching us to the knees.

"*Uli!*" shouted the skipper to the native steersman. "Here! *Soro na sila*, some of you!" and as they slacked off the sheet he drew me aft out of the waist, and continued.

"Well, as soon as we touched, I jumped out and waited for him.

"'What have you come for?' says he.

"'Stress of weather and short provisions,' I says. Then he stood looking at me for about a minute, while I opened my book again. After a bit he turned round, and went into his lean-to. When he'd gone in I come up to the door. There was a mat or two on the bed-place, but the floor was bare gravel, and the table an old packing-case nailed on two sticks stuck in the ground.

"'What d'yer want?' he says, when I looked in.

"'Nothing,' says I, and sat down in the doorway. After a bit he says, 'To-day's the third of June, and a Thursday, else you couldn't have landed. Who's Governor now?'

"'Des Vœux,' I says.

"'Never heard of him,' says he; 'thought Gordon was. What's *copra*?'

"'Ten pound five in Levuka.'

“‘Then I’ll get eight pound here,’ says he. ‘I see boats and steamers go past most weeks, but I don’t hear much news. When are you going?’

“I wasn’t going to let on about the *beeck-de-mar* racket, so I opens my book and sings ‘Rock of Ages cleft for me.’ Soon as I begun he comes out and stands looking at me. I only knew one verse, but I kep’ on and sung it three times over, keeping as near as I could to the tune, and he kep’ looking at me all the time as solemn as a cockroach. When I done it three times I sang Amen, and he went back into the shanty. Then I took off my hat and knelt up with my hands clasped as if I was praying to myself. Soon as I got up he says, ‘Come in, will yer, and sit down a bit?’ and then he calls his woman and begins talking Tokelau to her, and she fetched in a dish of hot *kumalas* the old devil had been keeping back till he thought I’d go. Then she got some eggs and took ’em off to the cook-house, and the old beggar sat on the bed all the time and said he’d wait till I’d done. But just as I’d got hold of a *kumala* he says, ‘Aren’t you going to say grace?’ a bit suspicious-like, and I says, ‘Of course I am, but I always takes hold of the food first;’ so I holds up the *kumalas* over my head, and says,

‘For what we’re going to receive, Amen.’ But when we’d done dinner we were good friends, and he’d told me all about his soul, and asked after mine; and he sends the girls off with *kumalas* for my boys. Then I says that idleness is a bad thing, and I’d like ’em to do a little fishing on the reef at low tide, and he says, ‘But you wouldn’t have them take life?’

“‘Certainly not,’ I says. ‘I wouldn’t kill a fish, not if it jumped into my pocket and I was starving, but with *beeck-de-mar* it’s different, for being a slug he ain’t got feelings, and even Darwin ain’t sure that he ain’t a vegetable.’

“‘That’s so,’ says the old beggar. ‘Well, as long as they don’t fish on Saturday or Sunday or Monday I don’t mind.’

“Well, by Friday night we’d got all the fish worth picking up on the lee side, and I got away on the Saturday, and promised I’d call in if I was passing, and there was a fire on the beach,—‘You might be wanting something, or be sick,’ I says.

“‘If I’m sick,’ he says, ‘I shan’t light a fire, for the Lord ’ll provide.’

“Barring religion, the old devil wasn’t so very cranky, except about a sort of fence he’d got under a *dilo*-tree.

I thought it was a grave, and went to look at it, but he come running after me with his eyes half out of his head, and pulled me away by the arm. I suppose his woman had had a kid that had died, and he'd got it buried there. Perhaps it's that that made him cranky. Well, there's no fire on the beach, so if he's alive he don't want anything."

## THE WARS OF THE FISHING-ROD.

FAR up the great river there once dwelt three clans in brotherly love, planting on the same lands, and giving their women to one another in marriage. Brothers in arms they were, and staunch allies whenever the hordes of Tholo made a descent upon them; nor could the elders remember any interruption in their friendship except once, when the pigs of Valekau destroyed the yam-gardens of Rara, and their owners would make no reparation. But this was long ago, and the tradition had become misty.

Rara stood upon a high bluff on a bend of the river, precipitous on three sides, and protected on the fourth by two ditches and an earthwork. Valekau, sprung from the same ancestors and worshipping the same gods, was built upon a lower hill a mile away, and set back from the river-bank. It needed no protection

but a war-fence on the crest of the hill, and the gate was an arch formed by the roots of a great banian-tree, so narrow that one warrior only could pass it at a time. Tovutovu lay in the plain on the other side of the river. Five ditches encircled it, having war-fences between each, and the gates were cunningly devised, so that he who would enter must encompass the town three times between the palisades before he could pass all the gates, for none was opposite to the other. Tovutovu had not the same gods as Rara, having descended later from the mountains to the plain. But in peace-time they planted together, and the women fished *kais* in the common fishing-ground; and when the *lali* beat for war, the young men painted their faces and lay in ambush together, and the women and children hid together in the forest behind Rara.

Now strange things began to be brought up the river. First there were rumours of foreigners who came up from the ocean in canoes like islands for bigness. This, they thought, was but another lie of their enemies, the coast-people. Next Seru of Rara brought a thing more solid than rumour—an adze made of a hard substance that cut deep into the toughest wood which the stone adze only chipped. The man who



gave it in Kasava told him that it was the least of the strange things the foreigners had brought, and that the foreigners had white skins like lepers, and covered them up with bark-cloth, being ashamed to show aught but their faces because of the colour. Also their noses were as long as bananas, and they spoke with women's voices.

Thenceforward the young men made many journeys down the river as far as they dared, and brought back with them other strange things—cloth not made from bark, but of a substance that could be washed without injury, and iron of many shapes that could be beaten out between two stones into adze-blades; and one of them brought back a tale of a devil the foreigners had which thundered, and every time it thundered a man fell dead, pierced through the body with an unseen spear. There was much striving between the clans to possess these strange things, and they were begged of the young men, and begged again of him to whom they were given, so that they passed from one to another until each of the elders had called them his. But they all yearned to possess the devil of the foreigners that thundered, and the young men made many journeys hoping to possess one, and returned

with many things, but always without this devil that they wanted. And one day when the youths of Rara returned from down the river, the young man Bativundi came running to the elders of Valekau as they sat at sunset in the great *bure*.

"The youths of Rara have returned from below, and it is said that they have brought with them a wonderful thing with which the foreigners take fish. It is a stick that grows long at will, as a bamboo shoots up from the ground; and from the top there comes a string, having at the end a fly with a hook hidden in its belly. This is the way of it. A man holds the stick in his hand and waves it, and the stick, being pliable, makes the fly dance upon the water; and whether it be magic, or whether the fish be befooled, I know not, yet they bite the fly and are pierced with the hook, and so drawn to land. No such thing has been seen in our land, for one man between sunrise and mid-day can take more fish than all Valekau can eat."

"*Kombo!*" cried the elders. "Let us send an embassy to Rara to beg this stick that we may eat fish and live."

So on the morrow Nkio took a root of *yangona* in his hand and went to Rara, saying, "I am come to

beg the stick with which fish are taken. It is the word of the chiefs of Valekau, your relations, that I beg this stick."

Now the men of Rara had touched the *yangona*-root, and clapped their hands, and they sat silent as if not knowing what answer to make. But at last one of them said, "Be not angry, Nkio, but return to Valekau, saying, 'We are a poor land, and it is difficult to grant your request.'" So Nkio returned and spoke as he had been bidden.

Valekau sat in council, and their hearts were grieved. Did Rara weigh their friendship so lightly that they wantonly refused a gift begged with the proper ceremonies? It was a gross insult. Rara esteemed them as slaves, things of no account, to be flouted at will; but they should know that a long peace does not blunt the spears nor paralyse the arms of Valekau. The bodies of their youths were not gross with slothful ease, nor the limbs of their elders stiff with wallowing on the mats. This insult must be paid for! But how? Then spoke Bonawai, the Odysseus of the tribe, versed in all the wiles and craft that bring a people to greatness—*Bonawai na dau vere*, Bonawai the schemer.

“Hearken!” he said, contracting his brows until his wicked eyes gleamed like fire-sticks. “Rara is a stronghold set upon a hill, and the young men within it are as the *kai*-shells about the cooking-places for multitude, and they have Wanganivanua and Tumbanasolo, both terrible in war. If a man would climb the hill on this side, surely his body would be like a *balawa*-tree at the cross-roads, at which the boys throw their reeds, so thick would it be stuck with spears; and if we lie in ambush for their women when they dig the yams, and bring the bodies home to be baked, we should not triumph long, for they would come upon us at first cock-crow, and if they feared to scale the war-fence, they would bind balls of lighted *masi* to their spear-heads and throw them into the thatch to windward, and while we were scurrying about foolishly, like ants whose nest the digging-stick has probed, striving to extinguish the fire, they would leap the fence and club us in the darkness from behind. For I know the men of Rara how crafty and subtle they are in wiles of war; yet there is none among them so crafty as I. Now listen! Across the river are the men of Tovutovu. Let us send to them, saying, ‘Come! You are our brothers.

In Rara there is much plunder, and women fair to look upon, and the men are puffed up with pride,—living as they do in so strong a fortress,—and call you and us their slaves. They have, besides, a certain stick—a magic contrivance of the foreigners—that takes fish until a man wearies of holding it. This we begged of them that we might give it to you, but they, knowing our intention, refused. Therefore, come! Let us wipe them out, and we will divide the spoil and the dead bodies and the slave-women as becomes chiefs.’ And if it happen that Rara be too strong for us, and we be repulsed, then we will send whales’ teeth to them, saying, ‘The men of Tovutovu seduced us, but if ye will, we will join you and cross the river and club these strangers of Tovutovu, dividing the spoil and the dead bodies as becomes chiefs.’ These are my words to you!”

And the elders cried, “*Vinaka, Vinaka!*” and clapped their hands.

Then an embassy was chosen,—Mawi, the left-handed, and Waleka, the orator,—and they took a whale’s tooth and crossed over to Tovutovu in the night, and spoke the words of Bonawai as they had been bidden. And the elders of Tovutovu took the whale’s tooth in

token that they would do the behest of which it was an emblem ; and the young men prepared black paint for their faces, and streamers of smoked *masi* for their elbows, and turbans, and dyed rushes for leg-ornaments, and arrayed themselves for war. And they came out into the square in the evening before the elders and the women, and boasted, looking very terrible with their weapons. And one ran forward and smote the earth thrice with his club, so that it trembled, and he cried, "Fear not, aged men, this club is your shield!" And another took his place, and gnashed his teeth, crying, "My name is 'Man-eater.' The corpses of Rara are my food!" And another cried, "My arms rest only when I am clubbing!" And another, "Lead me on, for I bark for human flesh!"

So they became exceeding bold with their boasting, each vying with the other, and the maidens saw their valour and admired them, and the elders laughed, crying, "Well done!" And towards evening the words of Bonawai came to them, bidding them cross over under cover of the night and attack Rara from the front at first cock-crow, for Valekau would yield them the place of honour, and themselves attack from the forest. So when evening was come they crossed the



*“Rasolo, being swiftest of foot, reached them first, and slew them with his throwing-club.”*





river at the bend where the bananas are, and came out into the yam-gardens. Here two old women of Rara were carrying home loads of firewood on their backs, fearing nothing, for it was peace-time; but when they saw the blackened faces of the warriors and the weapons they shrieked loudly, and threw down their burdens to run towards Rara. But the army of Tovutovu set upon them, and Rasolo, being swiftest of foot, reached them first, and slew them with his throwing-club as they lay upon the ground crying for mercy, and shielding their heads with their hands. Then they went to Valekau to wait until the moon set. And about midnight the men of Valekau left them and climbed into the forest, so as to descend upon Rara from behind, and intercept the fugitives, saying, "Let us attack just before the birds awake, for then is sleep heaviest upon men."

So before the first cock crowed the men of Tovutovu crept up the hill from all sides, and the army of Valekau crawled down the ridge in the forest to attack the war-fence at the back of the fortress; but ere they reached it a green parrot heard them, and flew shrieking to its mates, "Awake, awake!" and a man of Rara, who chanced to be without, said within himself, "A

green parrot never cries save when alarmed by men, and men are not abroad at this hour save for some evil," so he cried to his fellows in the great *bure*, "There is war! Make ready!" And they, suddenly awakened, snatched every man a weapon, and ran hither and thither in the darkness, not knowing what they did. And the women shrieked, and the children wailed, and there was a great uproar. And when the men of Valekau heard it they leapt into the ditch, caring nothing for the sharp stakes, and tore down the war-fence, and thrust fire-sticks into the thatch of the houses, and the wind from the forest fanned the glow into a flame, and the thatch was ignited so that it became as light as day. The men of Rara stopped not to strike at them, but fled down the hill towards the river like a mountain torrent after rain; and as the torrent sweeps away the dead wood that has choked its bed, so they bore down the army of Tovutovu before them, who, thinking themselves attacked, struck at them and fled, leaving the way clear. And so eager were the men of Valekau for plunder, that not one pursued, and all escaped but some women and children who knew not whither to flee. So Rara was burned, and their yam-gardens destroyed, and the army of Valekau carried

away the plunder and the dead bodies, and shared them with Tovutovu as became chiefs. But though they searched diligently, yet they did not find the cause of the war—the stick with which fish are taken ; and they sent to Tovotovu, saying, “ If we had found it, it should have been your portion ; but the Kai Rara are crafty, and must have buried it. Yet we send you bodies for the oven.” Thus was Rara wiped out, and Valekau and Tovutovu divided the spoil.

Now the people of Rara fled into the forest and dwelt there many days, eating wild yams, and seeking a place to flee to. And they sent messengers down the river to the chiefs of Korokula asking for protection, and leave to settle on their lands. And when the messengers returned they removed thither and built houses at Lawai, a little below Korokula, and their young men worked for Korokula, planting yams and bananas, and taking food in return until their own should be ripe. But the chiefs of Korokula oppressed them, saying, “ These are fugitives. Are they not our slaves to do as we will with ? ” And they killed their pigs, and took their women as it pleased them. And the men of Rara murmured, but endured, not knowing whither to flee. But at last, on a certain day, a chief of Korokula

was thirsty, and had no *yangona*, and he said to his young men, "I have seen a great root growing on the house foundation of Dongai of Rara. Go and tear it up, and chew it here before me that we may drink." And the men of Rara said among themselves, "They have killed our pigs, and taken our women, and we bore it. Now they tear up our *yangona*. How can this be endured? Yet we are not strong enough to set upon them, for they are more numerous than we. Let us now send an atonement to Valekau, and ask for peace to rebuild our houses upon our own earth and upon the foundations of our ancestors." So they took whales' teeth, and sent them by the hand of a herald to Valekau. And when the elders of Valekau doubted whether they should take them, the crafty Bonawai counselled them, saying, "There is now peace, but we are few in number. What if the tribes above descend upon us? How shall we alone resist them? Let Rara return, for in war they will help us against our enemies, and in peace they will fear us and do our bidding. Of this the whales' teeth are a token." So they accepted the atonement, and the fugitives returned, and rebuilt their houses upon their own earth and upon the foundations of their ancestors. And Valekau made a great

feast for them, and presented it with all the proper ceremonies in token that the past was forgotten.

Now, after many months, when the yams were ripe again, the men of Rara began to speak among themselves of how they might best repay the debt they owed to Valekau; and the elder, Dongai, counselled them, saying, "This Valekau is puffed up with pride, and all men hate them. It was but yesterday that I heard Tabuanisoro of Tovutovu say that his people were weary of their doings. Of ourselves we are too few to repay them, but if Tovutovu were our allies—— Let us therefore make a feast for them, and try them." So they made a feast, and challenged Tovutovu to play at *tinka* with them. And the young men of Tovutovu brought their *ulutoa*<sup>1</sup> to the *tinka*-ground and were victorious. And in the evening, when the elders were drinking *yangona* in the great *bure*, Dongai spoke a parable to them. "The blue heron saw the rat eating fish that the tide had left, and he asked for it; but the rat said, 'The gods sent this fish for me and mine, and they have given thee a long beak wherewith to catch fish in the pools where I cannot go.' Then the

<sup>1</sup> A reed-lance tipped with ironwood (*toa*) with which the game of *tinka* is played.

blue heron was angry and spoke to the crab, saying, 'This fellow is become a fish-eater and takes our food. Come, let us drive him out, and thy portion shall be the hole that he has made.' So they came upon the rat in the night-time, and the crab nipped his tail and he fled. But the crab did not have his hole, for the blue heron took it. And he was puffed up with pride, and flapped his wings, and said to the crab, 'My legs are longer than thine, therefore am I set a chief over thee. Bring me thy fish.' Is this a true story, chiefs of Tovutovu?"

And they said, "Yes, it is true."

And he said, "Now hear what the crab did. The rat came back and spoke to the crab, saying, 'Why didst thou bite my tail? Did I refuse thee fish? If thou hadst asked me I would have given thee all my fish. My quarrel was with the blue heron, yet thou camest in the night and nipped my tail; and now the blue heron oppresses us both. But he sleeps at night. Now thou shalt go and seize him by the foot, and I will climb upon his back, and bite his neck, and he shall not fly away because thou shalt hold his foot between thy pincers. When he is dead we will share the fish of all the coast between us, but thou shalt have the greater share.'"

And for a space all looked upon the ground and picked at the mats with their fingers. Then Tambuani-soro said, "It is a good story, and also true!"

And on the morrow Rara and Tovutovu took the first-fruits of the yams to Valekau as men take the first-fruits to a great chief. And they said, "You are now our fortress and our head. These are the wretched first-fruits of our barren gardens, for you know that we are a poor people not meet to offer food to chiefs." And then they piled the great yams high in the square, and bound live pigs beside the pile, and the men of Valekau accepted them, and their senses were dulled by the flattery. And they made a feast for their guests, and the ovens were opened about sunset, so they feasted until late in the night.

Then Dongai said, "It is yet day. Have you no dance? The dance is fitting when the men are filled with pig."

And the elders of Valekau called to their young men to make ready, and Dongai said, "I will send our young men to the forest to get torches." And he sent them, saying, "Go and make torches of reeds, and bring in secretly whatever the women have brought you from Rara." And they went out into the road and called

softly, and the women came out of the reeds and gave them clubs hidden in bunches of dry reeds like torches; and the men cut reeds and made torches there and returned to the town, having in the right hands a lighted torch, and in the left the torch that hid their clubs. Then the men of Valekau danced before the chiefs a war-dance with spears and clubs, the elders beating the ground with the bamboo drums, and the chiefs of Rara and Tovutovu applauded, crying "*Vinaka!*" many times; but Dongai said, "This is well done, but my men know a stranger dance than this—a war-dance taught by the gods of the old time, but now forgotten." And Bonawai laughed and said, "*Veka*. Do your young men know things that are forgotten, and can they surpass ours in the dance?" And Dongai said, "Who knows? Let them be tried. Only they have left their dresses and their weapons in Rara."

So Bonawai called to the youths of Valekau, who stood panting and sweating behind the torches: "Take ye the torches, and give your clubs to these gods of Rara who can dance better than ye." And the men of Rara took the clubs, and squatted four deep with the weapons poised, while the elders beat the drums and



chanted. And the men of Valekau derided them, for their faces were not blacked for dancing.

Now the men of Rara had given their spare torches to the men of Tovutovu, and as they stood in the shadows behind the torches they stripped the reeds from the clubs and held them behind their backs. And suddenly the dancers rose with a great shout, and rushed forward with brandished clubs, making the earth tremble. Then they retreated, and again rushed forward, spreading in a line facing the elders of Valekau as they sat under the cocoa-nut palms, and as they whirled their clubs in the dance the leader cried "*Ravu!*" (strike), and they struck, but not in the air, for every man struck the head of the man before him. And the men of Tovutovu struck at the torchbearers from behind, and the rest fled, crying, "Treachery!" But when they reached the upper gate the men of Rara stood there, and cried, "Payment!" and when they would escape by the lower gate they found the men of Tovutovu there also, and in their madness they tore down the war-fence and leaped into the ditch, where many were impaled on the sharp stakes they themselves had set up. And the victors fired the houses, and ran hither and thither clubbing all they met; and

had it not been for the darkness surely none would have escaped, for the men of Rara pitied none save a few women they took alive for slaves, but ran about crying "Bring torches!" and slaying. So that night was called *Mai-na-cina* (bring torches), because of the cry of Rara as they were slaying. Thus was Valekau wiped out, and Rara and Tovutovu divided the spoil.

Now the men of Valekau fled to the forest, and they counted those who were missing, and mourned over them. And Bonawai said, "This has been a grievous night, and there must be payment for it, but not now, for many brave warriors are fallen, and many of our *katikati*,<sup>1</sup> therefore are we become as helpless as the straws whirled onward by a swift current. Let us flee to the caves, and dwell there until our way be plain." So they dwelt many months in the caves, eating wild yams and bush-pigs.

And after many months the chiefs of Rara, whose mothers were Valekau women, said, "Let our *vasu* return, for it is a shame to us that our mothers' folk should be rooting in the forest like wild boars. Also they are few, and cannot harm us." And the chiefs of Tovutovu agreed. So messengers were sent to the

<sup>1</sup> Women and children—non-combatants.

caves, saying, "Your *vasu* bid you return and fear not."

So they returned and built houses upon their own earth and upon the foundations of their ancestors, only they did not repair their war-fences. And they planted yams, and dug them, and planted them again, and still there was peace; but Bonawai pondered deeply in those days how the payment might be accomplished.

Now they took their first-fruits to Rara in token of submission, and Bonawai presented them and said, "We are poor. All our chiefs are gone, and only we, the low-born, remain to bring this poor offering to you, our elder brothers. Payment has been made as is right; for between brothers ill-will is buried when payment has been made, and alliances are renewed for war against the stranger. But my words are too long already—*Mana-c-dina!*"

And the men of Rara answered, "*Va-arewa-ia-ē,*" and clapped their hands.

And that night Vasualevu of Rara, whose mother was a Valekau woman, spoke to his *vasu*, and asked whether Bonawai's words were double. And they said, "Yes. We had a quarrel with you about a certain stick with which fish are taken—a magic contrivance of the

foreigners—and we burned your fortress, and you in turn burned ours. Thus there was payment as is fitting between brothers. But with these low-born of Tovutovu we had no quarrel, neither had ye, yet they burned both your town and ours, and baked the bodies of your relations, and even now they feed the pigs they took from Rara and Valekau. All this they did though they are not our brothers, but strangers. Shall not payment be taken for all these things ? ”

And Vasualevu told the elders of Rara that night as they lay in the great *bure*, and Dongai said, “Are the words true or false ? Surely they are true ! What root of quarrel had we with this Tovutovu that they clubbed our women and burned our fortress ? But for them we should not have been fugitives, oppressed of Korokula, for Valekau dared not to fight us alone. Even now, perhaps, they laugh at us in Tovutovu, and grow fat upon our pigs. Shall not payment be taken for all these things ? ”

And the elders said, “It is true. Let us send to Bonawai, the crafty, to devise a plan.”

So they sent a messenger to Valekau, and he said, “Go, tell the chiefs of Rara that I have seen their great *bure*. It is ruinous, for the king-post is rotten. Let

Tovutovu cut them a new post." Now this was true, for when the *bure* was burned the king-post was not consumed, and they rebuilt the house, using the old post.

So the chiefs of Rara sent to Tovutovu, saying, "Help us to rebuild our great *bure*, for the post is rotten. We have seen a *vesi*-tree seven fathoms long, and of great girth, which two men with outstretched arms cannot encompass. Let this be your work, for you are more numerous than we."

And they said, "It is well."

And every day the young men cut reeds and bamboos for the house in the plain across the river by Tovutovu, and cried to the people weeding their yams, "Our task is near finished; only the king-post is wanting."

So the Tovutovu chiefs took the young men up the river to the great *vesi*-tree, and lit a fire about it to burn up the sap, and cut it down with their adzes. Then they lopped off the branches, and cut a hole in the butt of the tree, and took vines as thick as a man's thigh and passed them through the hole, and dragged the tree inch by inch on rollers till they got it into the river. And they made rafts of bamboo, and bound them to the sides of the tree to make it lighter. And

when night came on they camped on the river-bank, where they could hear the water swishing past the tree. And they sent a messenger to Rara, saying, "The tree is fallen!" This was for a sign to them to make ready for the feast, according to custom. And the messenger returned and said, "Drag the post to Vatuloaloa, where the river widens, and no farther; there we will make a feast, and bring the post to Rara on the morrow."

So they toiled all the next day, dragging the post down the river, for there had been no rain, and the water was very shallow. And when they drew near Vatuloaloa they put on leaf girdles and blue conch-shells and chanted—

"E-mbia wanga é-mbi,  
E-dua thombo, ié!"

and each time they cried *ié!* they hauled on the vine-rope with all their strength, and the great tree moved on a step. And now they had come to a place where the river was hemmed in with high cliffs, and the bed was obstructed by great boulders that had fallen from above. They could see the black rocks of Vatuloaloa below them. And there was a shout from the cliffs above, and when they looked up they saw the men of

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Rara standing on the edge, but instead of food-baskets they had spears and war-fans in their hands, and their faces were painted. And there came a shout from the cliff toward Tovutovu, and they looked and saw the men of Valekau standing prepared for battle. And one said, "What does Valekau here prepared for battle? Surely this is treachery!" So they threw down the vine-rope and shouted, "How is it?" And the men of Valekau answered, "You shall be repaid to-day!" And they threw great stones down on them as they stood waist-deep in the angry water, and the men of Tovutovu fled, some up-stream and some down, splashing the water high above them; but when they reached the low bank there were armed men guarding them. Thus were they like a wild boar at bay encircled by barking dogs. And in their madness they took stones from the river-bed, and ran at the men of Valekau; but many were slain, and those who escaped lay all day in the thick rushes, and saw a great smoke rising from the plain where Tovutovu was, and knew that the doom of their wives and children was accomplished. And when night was come they crept from their hiding-places, and fled into the forest until the remnant of them was gathered together there. Thus was Tov-

tovu wiped out, and Rara and Valekau divided the spoil.

And the remnant of them went up the river to Uthadamu, and dwelt there many months. But their hearts yearned after their own land. So when the yams were ripe they sent an embassy to Rara saying, "We are few in number and in pitiable plight. We pray you, let us return again to our own earth and the foundations of our ancestors, that we may breathe again." And the messenger returned, and said, "They accepted the whales' teeth and said, 'It is well. Return.'" So they went back, and built houses on their old foundations, and sent to Rara saying, "Appoint a day when we shall bring you offerings of atonement."

And the elders of Rara spoke to the chiefs of Valekau, "Are we not weary of war? Our young men thirst only for battle, and neglect the food-plantations, so there is scarcity. It was not so when we were young. Now therefore let us lay war aside, and make peace."

So they appointed a day when they should all meet together and take counsel. And on the appointed day the men of Tovutovu brought whales' teeth and rolls of bark-cloth, and presented them to the chiefs of Rara



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and Valekau as an offering of atonement. And Dongai said, "We are met to-day to make peace, for we are all weary of war. Many brave warriors are dead, and the land is empty. As for us of Rara, the war did not come from us. We only repaid that which was done to us. To what end has it been, this fighting between brothers?"

Then Bonawai of Valekau spoke. "It is true, O chiefs of Rara, that the war has been an evil one, for all our fortresses have been burned, and the land is empty. But neither did the war begin with us. True it is that the tree grows from the root, but there would be no root unless a seed had first been sown. Chiefly do I blame you, chiefs of Rara, for you were the cause of these wars. Have you forgotten that stick with which fish are taken—a magic contrivance of the foreigners—by which a man could stand and take fish until his arms fell to his sides from weariness? This we sent to beg of you, and you churlishly refused."

The men of Rara bowed their heads, and picked at the ground. Then Dongai spoke: "O chiefs of Valekau, it is true that ye sent to beg this stick, but we hungered for fish, and—how could we give it, not having yet seen its magic?—and—and——"

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"And ye knew not how to use it," said Vasualevu.

"Then," said Nkio, the herald, "if it be peace show us now this magic stick, for we know that ye have it hidden."

"We cannot show it to you."

"Why?"

"We dare not, lest the gods of the foreigners be angry."

"This is foolishness," muttered the elders of Valekau. "What peace is this when we ask and are refused? We pray you, show us the stick."

"Be not angry, O chiefs of Valekau, but in truth we know not where it is."

Then the anger of Valekau was roused, and they said, "Ye are befooling us! Have ye forgotten how ye refused us before?" And they began to go out from the house.

Then Koronumbu of Rara spoke. "Why do ye hide the truth in doubtful sayings? Know then, chiefs of Valekau, that we never had this stick ye speak of, but when ye sent to beg it of us shame came upon us that we had it not, and we could not tell you, fearing that ye would despise us."

There was silence for a space, and the elders of Rara

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sat with bowed heads. Then Bonawai, the crafty, spoke, "See that ye tell no one, for if the coast people hear this tale how shall we endure their ridicule when they ask us, 'Why went ye up against Rara? Did ye hunger for fish?' Therefore hide this thing, and let no one know it."

## THE FIRST COLONIST.

THIS is a true story, or at least it is as true as any other that depends for its details upon tradition. It is the story of a man who had an opportunity and used it; who, being but a shipwrecked sailor, knew how to make himself feared and respected by the arrogant chiefs who had him at their mercy; who tasted the sweets of conquest and political power; and who brought about, albeit indirectly, the cession of Fiji to England. Many have the dry bones of the story—how the Swede, Charles Savage, a shipwrecked sailor or runaway convict, armed with the only musket in the islands, raised Bau from the position of a second-rate native tribe to be mistress of the greater part of the group; and how after a few years of violence and bloodshed he was killed and eaten by the people of Wailea

who thus avenged hundreds of their countrymen whom Savage had helped to bring to the ovens of Bau. To clothe these dry bones with living flesh we must turn to native tradition,—those curious records, often silent as to great events, while preserving the most trivial details—often indifferent to sequence, always disdainful of chronology.

Fiji is linked to the rest of the Pacific by that romantic history, stranger and more absorbing than any fiction, which ended in the tragedy and the pastoral comedy of Pitcairn Island; for Lieutenant Hayward, who was despatched from Tonga in a native canoe by Captain Edwardes of the Pandora to search for the missing mutineers of the Bounty, was the first white man of whose landing in Fiji we have any authentic record. His visit was forgotten by the natives in the horror of the great pestilence, the *Lila balavu*, or wasting sickness, the first-fruits of their intercourse with the superior race. “From that time,” says an epic of the day, “our villages began to be empty of men, but in the time before the coming of the sickness every village was so crowded that there was no space to see the ground between the men, so crowded were they.” From this pestilence

dated the custom of strangling those sick of a lingering illness lest they should, in the malignity of misery, spit upon the food and lie upon the mats of the healthy, and thus make them companions in their suffering. No wasting sickness was like the great *Lila*, for men and women lay till the bark-clothes rotted from their bodies, and their heads seemed in comparison to be larger than food-baskets; and they were so feeble that they lacked the strength to pull down a sugar-cane to moisten their parched throats unless four crawled out to lend their strength to the task.

Twelve years passed. The places of the dead were filled. The crops and animals wasted in the funeral feasts were again abundant, when the men of the eastern isles saw white men for the second time. On a night in the year 1803 there was a great storm from the east. When morning broke and the men of Oneata looked towards the dawn, they saw a strange sight. On the islet Loa, that marks the great reef Bukatatanoa, red streamers were waving in the wind. Strange beings, too, were moving on the islet—spirits without doubt. There were visitors in Oneata, men of Levuka in the island of Lakeba, offshoots in past

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time from distant Bau, holding special privileges as ambassadors who linked the eastern with the western islands. Two of these, bolder and more sophisticated than the natives of the place, launched a light canoe and paddled cautiously towards Loa. They gazed from afar, resting on their paddles, and returned with this report: "Though they resemble men, yet they are spirits, for their ears are bound up with scarlet, and they bite burning wood." Then the elders of Oneata took much counsel together, wishing yet fearing to approach the spirits that were on Loa; but at last they bade the young men launch the twin canoe Taiwalata, and sailed for Loa. And as they drew near, the strange spirits beckoned to them, until at last they drifted to the shore and took them into the canoe to carry them to Oneata. But one of them they proved to be mortal as themselves, for he was buried on Loa, being dead, whether of violence or disease will never now be known. Here the traditions become confused. There were muskets and ammunition in the wrecked ship, but the men of Oneata knew nothing of their uses, else had the history of Fiji perhaps been different. They hid the casks of powder to be used as pigment for the face,

and the ramrods to be ornaments for the hair. And one of them, says the tradition, smeared the wet pigment over hair and all, and when it would not dry as charcoal did, but lay cold and heavy in the hair, he made a great fire in the house and stooped his head to the blaze to dry the matted locks! None knew what befell. There was a sudden flash, very bright and hot, and a tongue of flame leaped from the head and licked the wall, and the chief sprang into the *rara* with a great cry, for his hair was gone, and the skull was more naked than on the day when he was born. It was, they said, the work of spirits; and they used the black powder no more.

The strangers had scarce landed when a second great pestilence broke out. There is pathos in the fragmentary saga of the time which has been handed down to us—

“The great sickness sits aloft,  
 Their voices sound hoarsely,  
 They fall and lie helpless and pitiable,  
 Our god Dengei is put to shame,  
 Our own sicknesses have been thrust aside,  
 The strangling-cord is a noble thing,  
 They fall prone ; they fall with the sap still in them.  
 . . . . .  
 A lethargy has seized upon the chiefs,



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How terrible is the sickness!  
 We do not live ; we do not die,  
 Our bodies ache ; our heads ache,  
 Many die, a few live on,  
 The strangling-cord brings death to many,  
 The *malo* round their bellies rots away,  
 Our women groan in their despair,  
 The *liku* knotted round them they do not loose,  
 Hark to the creak of the strangling-cords,  
 The spirits flow away like running water, *ra tau e.*"

Many of the foreigners never left Onkata alive. A doubtful tradition ascribes their death to the pestilence ; a more detailed says that they were slain by the men of Levuka. As the natives believed them to be the cause of the sickness, we may accept the more tragic of the two.

It was a year of terror. Here is a fragment of another poem of the same time:—

"Sleeping in the night I suddenly awake,  
 The voice of the pestilence is borne to me, *uctau*,  
 I go out and wander abroad, *uctau*,  
 It is near the breaking of the dawn, *uctau*,  
 Behold a forked star, *uctau*,  
 We whistle with astonishment as we gaze at it, *uctau*,  
 What can it portend ? *uctau*,  
 Does it presage the doom of the chiefs ? *e e.*"

From contemporary traditions we gather that the

comet had three tails, the centre tail being coloured and the two outer white; that it rose just before daybreak, and that it was visible for thirty-seven nights in succession. Was this the comet of 1803, or Donati's? Here, as in all ages and countries, the comet was believed to be an omen of coming evil—not the ravages of the unknown plague, but the death of some great chief. In like manner the comet of 1843 presaged the fall of Suva, and that of 1881 the death of King Cakobau.

Bau was now rising into fame. Her people, like their neighbours of the Rewa delta, had swept down from the sources of the Rewa, the cradle of the race, had for a time held a precarious footing among the older tribes by dint of constant fighting, and had at last fought and schemed their way to independence. Opposite to their stronghold Kubuna lay the tiny island of Bau, protected from a land attack by two miles of shallow sea.

Bau, or Butoni as it was then called, was occupied by the chiefs' fishermen, who bartered their fish for the produce of the plantations on the mainland. But the security of their island made them insolent, and, to punish them, the chiefs resolved to attack and

occupy their village. The incursion was made about the year 1760, and the fishermen were banished from the place for a time. With the help of their dependants the chiefs scarped away the side of the hills and reclaimed land from the shallow sea, facing it with slabs of stone. Thenceforth Butoni was known as Bau, the place of chiefs.

Secure in their island stronghold, the chiefs of Bau soon forgot their common origin with the poor relations they had left behind on the mainland to cultivate the plantations. The pursuit of arms has in every age conferred aristocracy, while the cultivation of the food on which warriors and cultivators alike exist has ever tended to sink men to serfdom. Under Banuve, the son of Durucoko, Bau had begun to make her power felt. Banuve had a definite policy; he tolerated no rivals. When the chief of Cautata presumed on his relationship to Bau by his mother, no warning was given him. He was attacked in the night, and his stronghold of Oloi burned. Yet this harsh discipline failed to satisfy his jealous kinsman. Intrenchments could be rebuilt, and half-beaten tribes are doubly dangerous. Eight times was Cautata rebuilt, and eight times was it reduced to ashes; nor

was there peace until earth had been brought as a *soro*, and Cautata had acknowledged herself to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for Bau. But Banuve did not often risk open battle when there were so many who would fight for fighting's sake. In his day Bau was first known as the nest in which plots were hatched, because Bau knew that the whale's tooth proffered to an ally in secret was a surer weapon than the club. When the comet threw its glare over Bau, presaging evil, there were two States against whom Banuve's plots could not prevail. Seven miles north of the little island was Verata, an intrenched fort in a deep bay that faces the island of Viwa. Till Bau was colonised, Verata drew tribute from the coast as far as Buretn, and the struggle for the mastery was ever impending. To the southward was Dravo allied with Nakelo, too strong to be yet attempted.

Such was the position of Bau when the pestilence reached it, by means, it is said, of a canoe from Ovalau. Cholera, dysentery, or whatever it may have been, it struck chief and commoner alike. "Their limbs became light, and when they would walk they reeled and fell, and where they fell they lay; nor was there any to tend them, for all were stricken alike. Then did

war cease, for the strong warriors were stricken and withered like the *daiga* that droops in the evening. They were as men bereft of sense, for those who had strength launched the canoes and sailed away, and the sick died more swiftly when there was none left to bring them food: their bodies rotted in the houses, or were devoured by the hogs. Yet the living could not escape by flight, for the pestilence, borne on the wind that filled their sails, overtook them even in the place whither they fled. . . . None can tell the terror and the pity of that time."

From Bau, however, they did not attempt to escape, for the sickness was raging on the mainland opposite to them, and beyond the mountains there were none but enemies. They stayed and sickened and died, and the last to die was Banuve, surnamed Sevunigele ("the first-fruits"), their Vunivalu. And his spirit went and stood on the bank of the swift stream at Lelele, and Cema answered his cry, and brought to him the *resi* canoe on which chiefs only may embark. And he crossed the eel-bridge and made ready his stone to throw at the great pandanus by which the love of wives is proved. And his stone went true to the mark. So he rested, knowing that his wives must

soon follow him to bear him company in the world of spirits. Nor did he wait in vain, for on that very day four of his wives were strangled and buried with him in the same tomb. Henceforth he was not Banuve, but Bale-i-vaalagi ("He-who-fell-by-the-foreign-pestilence"). The doom of the forked star had fallen.

Banuve's eldest son, Ra Matenikutu ("The lice-killer"), succeeded naturally to the office of Vunivalu; but the rites of confirmation could not be performed until the arrival of the men of Levuka, whose peculiar province it is to conduct the ceremony. The traditions of Oneata say that they took with them to Bau on this occasion one of the white men; but the historians of Bau affirm that they came bringing with them no strangers, but a canvas house and the first foreign possessions seen by the Bauans.

We shall never know now what became of the red-capped sailors cast upon the reef at the ends of the earth in that stormy night of 1803. Perhaps they perished of the disease they brought with them; perhaps, like Gordon in the New Hebrides, they were sacrificed to the Manes of those whose death they had unwittingly brought about. Their fate is not even one

of the thousand mysteries of the sea which men would fain solve.

On the day fixed for the rite there was another portent. The sky was cloudless at high noon, when the sun suddenly paled and turned to the colour of blood. The air grew dark, the birds settled on the trees to roost, and the stars came out. There was silence among the people sitting before the spirit *bure*, Vatanitawake—the silence of a great fear. Then the god entered into one of the priests, and he screamed prophecies in the red darkness, foretelling war and the greatness of Matenikutu, the son of Bale-i-vaalagi, and crying that the face of the sun was red with the blood that he should shed.

This dramatic scene was no invention of the elders of Bau, for the tradition of the eclipse is to be found in Rewa, in Nakelo, and in Dawasamu, and in every case the day is fixed as the day of the confirmation of Ra Matenikutu. He saw many strange sights during his stormy reign, but assuredly none more weird and terrible than this scene in the lurid twilight, when he was declared Vunivalu.

In that year there were other strange omens, foretelling the change of the old order. The heavens

rained lumps of ice, that broke down the yam-vines and the stalks of the taro; and the people, touching them, said that burning stars had fallen from heaven. There followed a great storm. For many days the rain fell without ceasing, and the waters rose. The basin of the Rewa river, draining half the island, was swept with a torrent greater than any that have been seen before or since, and the waters rose over the house-tops, sweeping seawards in a roaring muddy flood. The strong fled to the hills and saved their lives; the sick and the aged were swept out to sea. When the waters subsided, the face of the country was changed, for the flood had covered the land and the reefs with a great layer of black earth. Thus were the flats of Burebasaga raised above the reach of the water, and thus was the land purged of the pestilence.

And now the new order was at hand. In 1808 the American brig *Eliza*, with 40,000 dollars from the River Plate, was wrecked on the reef of Nairai Island. The crew were allowed to live. Some of them made their way in the ship's boats to another American vessel that chanced to be lying at Bua Bay, ninety miles distant; five others, two of them Chinamen, were carried by the natives to Verata; one, named



Charles Savage, made his way to Bau in a canoe that chanced to be sailing thither. The hull was looted by the natives, who used the silver dollars—*lavo* they call them still, from their resemblance to the bean of that name—as playthings to be skimmed along the shallow water, or buried with the posts of a new house. Eighty years have passed, and though many sailors have deserted their ships with the purpose of enriching themselves from this lost treasure, and the natives have long ago learned the value of money, these records of the wreck are still occasionally found.

As soon as Savage reached Bau he besought Ra Matenikutu to send him to Nairai to search for a thing he wanted from the wreck, and when this was not granted he promised that if the thing were brought to him he would make Bau pre-eminent above all her enemies, even over Rewa and Verata. The thing they were to look for was like a *ngata* club, but heavier, and they must also find a black powder such as men use to paint their faces for war. The messengers searched diligently. They found the black powder, but none knew this thing of which the white man spoke. But at the last, when they were wearied with the search, one remembered that a *ngata* club

of a strange pattern had been built into a yam-house set up to hold the crop that was but just dug. There they found it, as the ridge-pole of the yam-shed, the weapon that should enable Bau to crush her rivals, and should bring even her at last under the dominion of a stronger than she.

When they returned to Bau, Savage took the thing to his house, and shut the doorway that no one might see. "And presently he bade Naulivou summon all the elders of Bau to the *rara* before the *bure* of the war-god Cagawalu—the same that was the untimely birth of the woman of Batiki—and there on the seaward side he set on end the deck-plank of a canoe; and he went with his weapon and stood before the foundation of the *bure*. Then he cried to the elders to watch the deck-plank, and he aimed and fired. And the people, knowing nothing of what would happen, dashed their heads upon the ground so that the blood flowed, and they were angry that the white man had not told them what he would do. He did not listen to them, but only pointed to the plank that the lead had pierced, saying that so would he slay the enemies of Bau. Then the young men took their spears and clamoured to be led against Verata; but Savage

bade them be silent, saying that they could not prevail against the place while there were white men like himself within the town. And he took a piece of white *masi*, and mixed water with the powder so as to make a black pigment, and with a reed split into many points he painted words upon the *masi*, and put it in a gourd and fastened the gourd to a stick.

“Then a canoe was made ready to carry him to Verata, where the other white men were. But they could go no farther than the point of the bay where the beach is open, for this was the frontier of Verata, and they were enemies. Here they set up the stick with the gourd hanging to it; and afterwards they sailed near to the town, but out of bow-shot, and shouted to the people to go and take the gourd. Now within the gourd were words from Savage to the white men bidding them leave Verata and come to Bau, which, he said, was the stronger, and a land of chiefs, where they would live unharmed.

“On the next day these men fled to Bau in a canoe which they had taken, and the forces were made ready to go against Verata. In the first canoe went Savage with his musket. When they were near the town he made them lower the sail and pole the canoe into the

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shallow water close to the moat. And the warriors in the town ran up and down behind the moat and taunted them, but their arrows fell short of the canoe. Then Savage stood up and shot at a man standing on the bank of earth beating the air with his club, and he fell forward into the moat. And all the others ran to him to see his hurt, and there was silence for a moment while they wondered, and fear gathered in their hearts. Then Savage loaded his piece again and fired at the men as they stooped over him that was wounded, and another fell; and panic seized the rest, and they fled behind the war-fence. Then Savage fired many times at the fence, and the lead passed through the banana-stumps that arrows could not pierce, and wounded the men that stood behind; for it was not until the bow gave place to the musket that the war-fence was made of earth. Then the men of Verata began to flee, and Savage leaped from the canoe and ran to tear down the fence. But as he broke through it a warrior of Verata, who stood just within, stabbed him in the side with his spear. The men of Bau who followed close upon him seized the man before he could escape, and bound him, and took him to the canoes, and he was afterwards slain

at Bau and baked in the ovens. Meanwhile the warriors from the other canoes were burning the houses and taking the spoil to the canoes, and clubbing all who had not escaped except a few of the women, who might serve as slaves for Bau. They took also a few of the men as prisoners to be slain at the *bure* of the war-god and cooked in the ovens. Thus was the power of Verata broken.

“They carried Savage to his own house. Here he had hung a hammock of sail-cloth between the posts, and in this he was laid, for he had lost much blood. But when the old men came with their *losi*-sticks and other implements to perform *cokalosi* on his body, they found him swinging in his hammock and swearing strange oaths with the pain of his wound. Nor would he let them touch him, but rather cursed them when he understood what they would do, and called for water to pour upon his wound.

“Bau fought no more till Savage was recovered of his wound. None dared touch his musket, for he had told them that there was magic in it that would kill any that touched it except himself; nor did the other white men dare to take it, for he had threatened them that if any disobeyed him he would require his

death at the hands of the chief, who would refuse him nothing."

When his wound was healed and he could move about the town, they prepared to make him *koroi* for the number of the enemy that he had killed. In Fiji, when a man had slain another in battle, he was led to the *bure* with great honour and dedicated to the god; his old name was taken from him, and a new name, with the prefix of "Koroi" (signifying "dwelling of"), was given to him in its place. A stone's-throw from Bau lies the little islet of Nailusi, on which Ra Matenikutu had built a house for his wives after it had been enlarged with stones carried from the reef. To this islet was Savage taken by several of the elders. There they stripped off his shirt and painted his face and breast with black paint and turmeric, though he mocked the while at their mummeries, protesting that he was cold. When all was ready they embarked again in the canoe with their spears, and landed opposite to the war-god's *bure*, where the priests and the old men were sitting. Here the warriors that were to be made "koroi," taught by the elders, poised their spears and crept slowly on the temple, dancing the *cibi*, the death-dance. And

Savage, painted and festooned like the rest, but wearing his trousers, went with them; but he would not dance to the chant of the old men. They planted their spears hung with streamers against the wall of the temple, and took new spears from the attendants. At night the feast was apportioned, and there was a great dance that lasted till the sun was high on the next morning. And when the dance was ended the chosen warriors brought offerings and piled them in the *rara*, and as each approached the priests called his new title. And after them all came Savage, bringing nothing but his musket, and the priest cried "Koroi-na-Vunivalu," a more honourable title than them all. But when they were taken into the *bure* and forbidden to bathe or eat with their hands for the space of four days, Savage scoffed fiercely at the priests who besought him to comply with their customs, and broke the *tabu*, leaving the *bure*, and going to his own home.

From this time they made Savage greater than any save the Vunivalu; some say, indeed, that greater honours were paid to him than to Ra Matenikutu himself. He was a chief of the tribe by adoption, not a foreigner as the others were. Two ladies were given him to wife, the daughters of the spiritual chief

and of the Vunivalu himself, and a great house was built for him at Muaidele, on the borders of the fishermen's town of Soso. We hear little of the other white men who were living at Bau. They took wives, and ate and drank and slept, while Savage sat in the councils of the tribe. Children were born to them, but they were all destroyed except Maraia, the daughter of Savage by a woman of Lomaloma—she who was afterwards married by force to the master of the Manila ship before he was murdered by his crew. She died in 1875.

Verata had given her submission with the basket of earth, and her enmity was no longer to be feared. The rival of Bau now lay to the southward. Through the system of navigable creeks in the delta of the Rewa river there was a water highway to Rewa, interrupted only by a narrow isthmus, over which the canoes had to be dragged. Commanding this isthmus stood Nakelo, whose strength no enemy had broken. Nakelo had refused to the Bau canoes the right of passing their town, and had compelled the messengers between Bau and Rewa to make the long and tedious journey by sea. The conquest of Nakelo would therefore be the first step towards the sover-



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eignty of the fertile delta. Savage took entire command of this expedition. He ordered them to plait a litter of sinnet large enough to hold him, and dense enough to turn arrows. On one side a slit was left as an embrasure for the musket, but the rest of it was arrow-proof. Then poles were fixed to it as handles, and Savage was carried round the town of Bau to test its strength. The force went against Nakelo by water, taking the litter in the canoes. When they were near to the place and could see the embankment crowned with the war-fence, Savage chose from among his followers two of the strongest and most fearless, and ordered them to set the litter down within bow-shot of the walls, and then to run back to their comrades, for he would engage the enemy alone. No sooner was the litter set down than it was stuck as full of arrows as the spines of an echinus. But when the garrison saw that there was but one man against them and no ambush, they were bolder, and made as if they would leave their defences and rush down upon him. For this Savage was waiting. As they mounted on the fence to take the better aim with their bows he fired through the embrasure of his litter, and a chief among them fell. The rest stood,

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helpless with terror, until he had loaded and fired again. Then, as at Verata, a panic seized them, and one among them took a mat and held it up to ward off the lead from the wounded chief as if he would ward off arrows; but the bullets pierced this also and wounded him who held it. Then they fled. And the warriors of Bau, who had been waiting out of bow-shot, leaped over the fence into the town, clubbing all they met and shouting their death-cry. So Nakelo the invincible was burned, and many prisoners were taken to Bau, to be dashed against the temple-stone and baked in the ovens. Savage was given of the captive women as many as he would take, and he gave them to the other foreigners that were in Bau. And the chief of Nakelo fled to Rewa, and sent from thence his submission by the hand of Matainakelo, craving leave to rebuild his village. So Ra Matenikutu took the whale's teeth, but ordered the men of Nakelo to dig a canal through the isthmus that obstructed the water-way, and henceforward to suffer canoes from Bau to pass to Rewa without hindrance, for the Queen of Rewa was a Bauan lady. And Nakelo dug a ditch into which the water could wash at high tide, and the swift current did the rest,

making the wide channel through which we pass to-day.

And now the power of Bau was swelled by the fame of these victories. Broken tribes, fleeing from their enemies in Vugalei, came to Ra Matenikutu, asking leave to settle on his waste lands in return for the tribute they would pay him for protection. Thus did Namara become *bati* to Bau; for when they chanced to meet the chief at Kubuna where they had come for salt, and he gave them a shark and a sting-ray to eat, there was a friendly contest between two of them that were brothers, as to which of them should be clubbed by the other as an offering to the great chief in return for the fish; and their cousin hearing the dispute cried, "You speak as if a man were as precious as a banana. What is a man's life? Let the elder be clubbed." So the younger clubbed him and presented his body to the chief. And when he knew what they had done he was grieved, and bade them bury the body there and not cook it; and he said, "I wanted no return for the fish, but ye have shown that ye are true men. Return to your place, and bring your wives and children, and come and settle on this land, and cultivate it, and be my borderers, for I have need of true men."

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There is no need to tell of how Buretu and Kiuva were subdued, and Tokatoka was driven out, until there remained only Rewa that was not subject to Bau. Against all these Bau prevailed through Savage, who ever led her forces with his musket. Other ships called in the group for sandal-wood, and left deserters and discharged seamen, attracted by the news of the dollars stored at Nairai, to swell the foreign colony at Bau—Graham from Sydney, Mike Maccabe and Atkins discharged from the "City of Edinburgh." These men, and three others whose names are lost, lived together in a house between Soso and the chief's town, practising every native custom except cannibalism, and far surpassing them in one form of licence. When a ship called for a cargo of sandal-wood, they would hire themselves out to pull the boats at a wage of £4 a-month, to be paid in knives, tools, and beads, which clothed them with a brief importance among the natives of Bau when they returned; but, for the rest, the natives looked on them with scorn and fear, as men with the manners of beasts and as breakers of the *tabu*. There came a day when one of the tributary tribes of Bau brought a great offering of food to the chief, Savage being absent with the army. The yams and turtle were

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piled in the *rara* opposite the dwelling of the white men. Here it was apportioned by the chief's *mata*; but when he called out the names of those who were to come and take a share, he did not cry the names of the white men. These then became very angry, and two of them, less prudent than the others, ran into the *rara* with their knives and slashed at the heap of yams, trampling the food under foot. Now the Fijians will endure any insult before this, and when the tidings reached the town every man caught up his weapon and ran towards Soso. But the white men were armed and ready, and as they came on three muskets flashed out from the dark doorways and three fell. And when they rushed on again it was the same. Many fell that day by the muskets; but the Bauans knew them to be but three, and their thirst for the blood of the white men only grew the stronger. Then one of them ran and took a firestick, and bound dry *masi* round it, and flung it into the thatch on the windward side, and the wind fanned it into flame. Still, though the white men knew that the house was burning, they would not leave it, for they saw the clubs brandished without, and knew that there was no escape. At last, when they could bear the heat no longer, they ran out, hoping to

reach the water, and two of them leapt into the sea and dived, swimming out to sea; but three were clubbed and slain as they ran. And while the men were preparing to follow those who were escaping by swimming, the words came from the chief to spare them. Thus were Graham and Buschart spared—the first to perish more miserably at Wailea, and the other to be the means of discovering the fate of De la Pérouse.

Savage had now the government of the group in his own hands. He had raised Bau to the mastery of the surrounding tribes; he could determine the future policy of the Bau chiefs; he had food, and man-servants, and women as many as his soul could desire. Yet there was one thing the lack of which poisoned all his existence. He had neither liquor nor tobacco; and what earthly paradise could be complete to a sailor of those days unless he had the power of getting drunk? It was this want, together with the necessity of maintaining his influence by the possession of the tools and muskets so eagerly coveted by the natives, that led him to take his last journey from Bau. In May 1813 news reached Bau that a large ship was anchored on the Bua coast, ninety miles distant, to load sandal-wood. From the description of the vessel the whites knew her to be

the East Indian ship Hunter, for which some of them had worked during the preceding year. It was arranged with the chiefs that in three months an expedition should be despatched to Bua to bring them back, so that they might not be left among the treacherous natives of that coast. Taking their wives with them, they reached the ship without accident, and were employed to pull the boats at the usual wage.

Maraia, Savage's daughter, remembered his last night in Bau, though she was then but four years old. She was alone in the house when her father came in and opened the sea-chest, which he always kept locked. From this he took a string of bright objects that glittered and flashed in the light from the door. Her exclamation startled him, for he thought that he was alone. He told her that he was going away for a long time, and that he must therefore hide his property in a place of safety. Then he kissed her and went out, taking a canoe to the mainland. She was asleep when he returned, and the canoe sailed for Bua before she awoke. She never saw him again. Perhaps his treasure was a string of silver dollars that still lies buried somewhere on the land opposite Bau.

The second mate of this ship was Peter Dillon, the lively Irishman who was afterwards made a Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur for his services in finding the remains of De la Pérouse's expedition. His story of the death of Savage and of his own escape has become, as it deserves, a classic in Polynesian literature. The sandal-wood had been coming in too slowly to suit the captain of the Hunter, and a bargain was at last struck between Captain Robson and the chief of Wailea, that if he would help them against their enemies they for their part would fill the ship within two months. On April 4 the crew, in three armed boats, accompanied by about 4000 of the natives, laid siege to the town of Nabakavu and took it, killing eleven of the enemy and destroying several villages. The bodies were there and then jointed, cleaned, baked in stone ovens, and eaten by the victorious natives, after which the boats returned to the ship. Four months passed away and two-thirds of the cargo were still wanting, when the chiefs sent a message to say that they could get no more sandal-wood. Nor would they come near the ship for fear of being taken as hostages. The captain now resolved to punish his old allies. Accordingly he



attacked a fleet of their canoes and captured fourteen of them with a loss to the natives of one man. At this juncture two canoes arrived from Bau with a force of about 220 men under the command of Tabakancoro and Matavutuvutua, the brothers of the Vunivalu, and Namosimalua, the chief of Viwa, afterwards one of the first Christian converts. Their ostensible object was to escort the white men and their wives back to Bau, but they did not intend to return with empty hands. The captain now determined to capture and destroy the canoes that were left to the people of Wailea, lest they might annoy him during the repairing of his tender. On September 6, 1813, the crew of the ship and about a hundred of the Bau warriors landed armed near the village, and proceeded towards it without any attempt to maintain order. They did not know that the few natives who were retiring before them, using the most taunting and insulting gestures, were "the bait for the net," and a certain indication that they were walking into an ambush. They reached a small village and set it on fire, and as the flames shot up they heard a horrible uproar from the path they had just traversed. The Bau chiefs knew the cries

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for the *vakacaucau* or death-cry of the Wailea, signifying that they had killed an enemy. The ambush had fallen upon the straggling party in the rear. Dillon and his companions now tried to fight their way back to the boats; but after emptying their muskets into the crowd of infuriated savages, they were driven to take refuge on the crest of a little hill. Only six of them reached it: the Bau chiefs and two of the white men from Bau were clubbed in the plain below. The party on the hill were Dillon, Savage, Buschart, Luis, a Chinaman who was wrecked with Savage in the Eliza, and two sailors from the Hunter. It was not yet mid-day; their ammunition was nearly exhausted, and they were hemmed in by many hundreds of infuriated natives, all sworn not to let them escape. From the top of the little hill they could see their boats at anchor, and the ship in the offing. Beneath them in the plain they saw the enemy carrying the bodies of their comrades, slung across poles, to the shade of some trees, where they were cut up and wrapped in green banana-leaves, to be roasted with the taro. But first they were set in a sitting posture, and insulted with unnameable indignities, while musket-balls were fired into them.

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The natives made several rushes at the hill, and were driven back by the steady fire of the little party. But the position was so appalling that Savage proposed an escape into the mangrove at the back of the hill, and was only prevented from doing so by Dillon's threat to shoot the first man that left the hill. Most fortunately for Dillon's party, there were eight prisoners on board the Hunter who had been captured by Captain Robson in his attack upon the canoes a few days before. As soon as the natives became calm enough to listen to Savage, they were reminded that these men were still alive, that one of them was the brother of the priest of Wailea, and that as soon as the news of their death reached the ship the prisoners would assuredly be sacrificed. The natives had hitherto supposed these men to have met the usual fate of prisoners of war. The priest now pressed forward, asking eagerly whether they were speaking the truth, and Savage (the unblushing Dillon says that it was he himself, but he also says that he could speak the language perfectly in four months, and gives some curious specimens of his proficiency) promised that if one of their number were taken to the ship the prisoners would be released, and a large

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ransom be paid for the lives of himself and his companions. These terms being agreed upon, Dafny, the wounded sailor, was induced to trust himself to the protection of the priest, and was seen to embark in a canoe and reach the ship in safety. Soon after his departure a number of the chiefs came within a few paces of the crest of the hill and spoke in the most friendly way to Savage, promising him safe-conduct if he would go down among them. So convinced was he of their sincerity that he urged Dillon to let him go down, assuring him that by so doing he could obtain safe-conduct for all. Having at last won his consent, he left his musket and went down to a spot about two hundred yards from the base of the hill, where the chief Vonasa was sitting. For a time they seemed to be on friendly terms, and the natives tried their utmost to persuade Dillon to follow Savage's example, saying, "Come down, Peter, we will not hurt you; you see we do not hurt Charlie." At this moment the Chinaman, Savage's former shipmate, stole away from behind Dillon to claim the protection of a chief to whom he had rendered former service in war. He had scarcely reached the foot of the hill when the natives, seeing that it was hopeless to

persuade Dillon to come down, yelled their war-cry and rushed up the hill to the attack. Savage was seized suddenly by the legs and thrown down, and was then held by six men with his head in a pool of water near to which he had been standing, until he was suffocated, while at the same moment a powerful native came behind the Chinaman and smashed his skull with his club. The two bodies were immediately disembowelled, cut up, and wrapped in leaves to be baked in the ovens.

Meanwhile the chiefs furiously incited their men to capture the hill with a rush. There were four muskets between the three defenders. Wilson, being a bad shot, was kept loading while the other two fired. Buschart, an old rifleman, shot twenty-seven men with twenty-eight shots: Dillon seldom missed. In the face of these heavy losses the men would not respond to their chiefs, but kept off, shouting defiance. The ovens containing the bodies of the men killed in the morning were now opened, and the roast joints of human flesh distributed among the different chiefs, assembled from all parts of the coast, with the same order and ceremony as is used in the apportionment of feasts on public

occasions. From time to time the chiefs shouted to Peter to come down before it grew too dark to cook his body properly, and boasted of the number of white men they each had killed. To his reply, that if they killed him their countrymen on board the ship would suffer, they cried that the captain might kill and eat his prisoners if he chose, but that they meant to kill and eat him (Peter) as soon as it grew dark enough to approach him without being shot. Dillon's greatest fear was that they would be tortured. He had heard from Savage stories of the flaying and branding of prisoners, of eyelid-cutting and nail-drawing, and he resolved to use the last cartridges upon himself and his companions.

Late in the afternoon the little party were horrified to see the boat returning from the ship with all the eight hostages. They believed that the captain would take the precaution of releasing four only until they were safe on board, but now they had no longer any lien upon the mercy of their assailants. As soon as they landed, the hostages were led unarmed up the hill by the priest, who delivered an imaginary message from the captain, bidding them hand over the muskets to

him and return to the ship. While he was haranguing Buschart, the idea of seizing him flashed across Dillon's mind. It was a desperate expedient, but they were in a desperate plight. He suddenly presented his musket at the man's head, swearing that he would shoot him dead unless he led him safely to the boat. The priest was the only man among the natives who possessed sufficient influence to keep the infuriated warriors in check. He was taken by surprise, and did not attempt to escape. Shouting to his people to sit down, he led the strange procession down the hill, through the angry multitude, now silent under protest, and on to the beach, walking slowly with a musket-muzzle at each ear, and another between his shoulders. Arrived at the beach, he said that he would rather be shot than move another step towards the boats. The whites backed into the water, still covering him with their muskets, until they reached the boats. Then, as they pushed off, the natives rushed down and sent a shower of harmless arrows and stones after them. Six of the crew and eight of the white men from Bau had perished.

On the following morning Dillon made an unsucces-

ful attempt to recover the bones of the Europeans. A native flourished the thigh bones of the first mate, but refused to part with them, saying that they were to be made into sail-needles.

The canoes had set sail for Bau with some fifty of their company wounded. They had not communicated with the ship, and had therefore left behind two Europeans and a number of their women. The ship sailed the same day, and being unable to land her native passengers at Bau, carried them on to New South Wales. Buschart and a Lascar were, however, landed at Tucopia, where they were found thirteen years afterwards, and were instrumental in the discovery of the remains of De la Pérouse's ill-fated expedition.

So gross an insult as the slaughter of two of the Vunivalu's brothers could not go unpunished. On the return of the canoes the indignation in Bau was intense. A strong expedition was at once fitted out, and before the end of the year Wailea was in ashes, and Vonasa and half his tribe had followed their victims to Naicobocobo. Many were slain in the sack of the town, but a few were carried captive to Bau to glut the



vengeance of Vunivalu himself. There, at the mercy of their captors, they died such a death as amply avenged the chiefs who fell at Wailea.

Thus did Charles Savage, the Swede, meet a death in harmony with his stormy life, and with the fate that he had brought upon so many others. His works followed him. Epic poems, now half-forgotten, were composed in his honour. With the descendants of the people among whom he lived he has almost attained the dignity of a legendary hero, and but for their conversion to Christianity he would undoubtedly have been given a place in their Pantheon. He is remembered while all that is left of the gigantic and heroic Dillon is the name of the little hill that saved his life in Wailea Bay. Though the tragedy itself is almost forgotten, the knoll is still called Koroi-Pita (Peter's Hill). Through Savage, Bau rose to a rank among her sister tribes that she never forfeited. When the growing intercourse with foreigners demanded the recognition of Fiji as a people obeying acknowledged leaders, Bau fell naturally into the place of sovereign over all her rival States, and as possessing power to cede to England the territory of all for the common good.

Therefore in time to come, when some historian, weary of seeking an untried field for his pen, turns to Fiji, he will, in valuing the political forces that have led to this end, give a leading place to the deeds of Charles Savage, the first colonist.

THE END.

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